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A HANDFUL OF SILVER

SIX STORIES OF SILVERSMITHS

WRITTEN BY HORACE TOWNSEND

PICTURED BY ALEX. M. McLELLAN

THE GORHAM COMPANY

NEW YORK

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TO EDWARD HOLBROOK, ESQ.

Dear Mr. Holbrook:

The Eighteenth Century author felt his book incomplete wanting a dedication to his patron. A custom worth adopting, it seems to me, if for patron I may substitute friend. In this case you have a peculiar title to the trifling courtesy. In the first place it was at your suggestion that these stories were written. In the second, you yourself have written, in words more enduring than mine, the story which should fitly close the series and exhibit to us the silver worker of our own day. In this utilitarian age of clanking machinery and mechanical repetition you have in the heart of a great factory kept alight the flickering flame of artistic handicraftsmanship. To-day, thanks mainly to you, there are at Providence many hundreds who put into daily practice, as they handle that elder brother of all useful metals, silver, the precise methods and technical devices employed by my Mysian fashioner of shields, by my Egyptian Neku, by Cellini the Italian, by Hans the son of mediæval Nuremberg, and by Master Paul Revere of Boston town. There is

nothing new and nothing old in the silversmiths' craft, as I have discovered by that long-continued delving in the records of the past which the pleasant task of writing my stories has entailed.

So, as my friend, and as the head of the Gorham Company, I offer you my book, and, since I began by a reference to the Eighteenth Century, let me close by reverting to one of its ceremoniously formal fashions and subscribe myself,

Your obliged friend and servant,

Horace Townsend

New York
May, 1902

THE OLD WORLD
1000 B. C.

MOUNT IDA

IN DISTANT AGES BORN. HOW THE BLIND SINGER OPENED THE EYES OF THE SILVERSMITH TO ALL THE BEAUTIES OF THE COMMON LIFE

A bird flew with a twitter and a rustle of its wings across the rocky pathway, scarce distinguishable from the track of a wild goat, which led down a sunny slope of Mount Ida to the plain beneath. It was the noonday heat, when all nature lay basking somnolently beneath the cloudless sky, silent and tranquil save for the ceaseless quivering of the heat-haze. In the midst of the almost oppressive silence this frightened flutter was almost violent in its disturbing discord. It certainly arrested the attention of a white-bearded old man whose long and snowy locks fell in untended disorder over the worn and soiled sheepskin mantle, which, with an old man's craving for warmth, he wore, despite the sultriness of the midsummer sun, across his shoulders. It was not surprising that this should

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be so, for the sense of hearing is, in the case of the blind, almost preternaturally acute, and that the large and vacantly-staring eyes of the old man were sightless was evidenced by the fashion in which he leaned his left hand on the shoulder of a handsome boy, who carried in his arms a lyre, the graceful form of which could be discerned beneath the somewhat dingy woolen covering which protected it from the dust of travel. In his right hand the old man bore a wooden staff, with which he felt his way along the rugged path, and thus added to the assistance given to him by his youthful guide.

'Eteocles,' said the old man, in deep, sonorous tones, 'surely that bird was frightened by some man, for savage animals haunt not these lower slopes of the mountain. Your young eyes should see if we approach the homes of men, and yet you warn me not.'

'Master,' piped the lad in his boyish treble, 'I thought we were far away from any village, but now I think I see under yonder clump of cypress trees a hut, at whose door stands a man.'

'Lead me thitherward, boy,' commanded the old man, and the boy obeying, they came in a few moments to a low, roughly-built steading, thatched with rushes, and having one large window in front over which was stretched a carefully scraped sheepskin, taking the place of glass, in that, while freely admitting the light, it kept out the too fierce rays of the summer sun, or the driving rain of the winter storms. At the open doorway stood a man whose dress was hidden beneath a blackened leathern apron, which fell from his neck to his knees. As he stood on the threshold, he raised his arms above his head and stretched himself as though weary with long application to some confining pursuit. A good-natured fellow he seemed, for, as he caught sight of the travelers, his face lit up with a smile, and he called out in cheery tones, 'Come on, old man! and you, my boy, come on! 'Tis seldom I see the faces of strangers in this outlandish place, and when I do catch sight of them I am not wont to let them pass me by. Come across my threshold and drink a cup of wine with me, tell me such news of the countryside as may have come your way, and a hearty

welcome to you!' and he threw the rough plank door wider open with a hospitable gesture.

'The hospitality of the Mysians,' said the old man, 'is known far and wide, and, in truth, you speak like a true Mysian; so I will e'en accept your cup of wine as frankly as it is offered and rest for awhile in the shadow of your roof-tree. Not that I myself am over weary, but the lad's youthful limbs are not so accustomed to your rough mountain-paths as are the old man's, and for an hour past I have felt that the boy has lagged. Of the gossip of your neighbours I fear I can tell you naught, for a stranger am I to these parts, journeying as speedily as may be from Ilios to the coast below, there to take ship for my own island of Kreta. I can, however, strike a chord or two upon my lyre and chant to you one of my songs, to which ere now kings and daysmen have listened with approval.'

'In truth I am in luck to-day,' said the Mysian, as he ushered the two travelers into his dwelling and dragged forward a rude wooden bench on which they might sit. Then from an inner room he brought forth a skin of wine and busied

himself unfastening the thong which secured its mouth, preparatory to pouring, with true rustic 'nearness,' a carefully-measured portion into each of the three metal cups which he took from a shelf hanging on the wall. Out of an earthenware jar he then filled them to the brim with water, handed one to each of his guests and raised his own towards them in token of amity. With a dexterity born of life-long custom each of the three before drinking gave his cup a slight whirl which spilled a providently scanty portion upon the ground. The wine thus poured out represented a libation to the gods.

The old man took a long and apparently satisfying draught of the tempered beverage, but before placing the emptied cup on the bench beside him, his thin, nervous fingers played caressingly over the outer surface, which was beaten into a raised ornamental pattern.

'Surely,' said he, in a tone of surprise, 'I do not mistake; but this cup is of silver and worked into a cunning pattern with the hammer. I did not think to find a vessel fitted for a king's board in a hut on the mountain side.'

His host smiled. 'We have a saying,' he replied, 'in these parts, that the children of the maker of shoes go ill-shod, but it would be strange if a worker in silver could not find his friends something better than a cup of horn out of which to drink.' 'You are, then a silversmith?' queried his guest. 'I work in all metals; but since, some three years back, I bought from some Phoinikes on the market-place at Assos two bars of silver and worked them into cups and platters, I have not cared to put hammer to gold or copper or tin.' 'I do not understand you,' said the blind man. 'Aye,' asserted the smith, 'but you would if, like me, you had felt the white metal spread itself beneath the blows of your hammer and take the shape to which you destined it as though it were a live thing obedient to your very thought. There be those who place the yellow gold at the head of all the metals men dig from the earth, others to whom red copper is all-satisfying; but to my thinking, silver, white as the robe of Artemis the Moon-maiden, is the only metal in which a man who loves his craft should work were it permitted him to make his choice.'

 'Is

'Is it with the hammer, then, that you make these brave images that I feel around this cup?'
'Think you those fair? Why, they are but child's play to what I can do when the mood is on me,' said the silversmith, with true artist's vanity.
'Come here, old man, and if Zeus has taken from you the sight of your eyes, with your fingers you can at least feel the figures and the faces of the panel I am working for the priests of the Temple of Apollo at Assos, to be fastened in front of the altar;' and he led the blind man to a bench placed in front of the window and guided his hands to a large plate of silver fastened down upon a square of green hide from which the water was oozing. The old man passed his delicate fingers over the surface.
'So you have fashioned the Sun-god warring with the hideous python,' said he, 'and very beautiful indeed is his god-like face and noble are his limbs. Hideous is the monster, and that the hand of man should have wrought this is hard to be believed. Surely the lame Hephaistos must have assisted you. But what is this loathly hide I feel beneath the smooth silver?'

 'Truly,

'Truly,' said the smith, 'it is a common and a loathly thing and unfitting it must seem to you to be wedded as it were to the pure body of the shining silver; but without it I could not fashion those rounded limbs or that divine face. When I have roughly hammered the silver into form from the back I fasten it down on wet hide, which supports it and yet gives way sufficiently when with my hammer and these small chisels I work the finer lines and modelling of my figure. Then when the work is finished the hide is cast on to the rubbish-heap in the forest there, while the silver panel is placed in the highest place of honour in the Temple. So it is with the poor smith himself, who dies and is thrown away and forgotten while his work endures and is honoured.' 'Aye, but your work does endure,' sighed the blind man, 'but when I die, as soon I must, my songs die with me and we both are as though we never were. Herein is your fate a happier one than mine, O smith, and if Zeus had not robbed me of my sight I too might have made beautiful things instead of idly singing of them. As it is, your name will be remembered and held in

 esteem,

esteem, while mine is as forgotten as the cooling breezes of last summer, which, while they blew, men blessed and found comfort in, but which now have gone they know and care not whither.'

'Look you!' said the silversmith, 'we are none of us satisfied. 'Tis less than a year ago I was in Assos, and at the guest-house there a singer took his lyre and after supper he sang to us of the gods and the goddesses; of Zeus the son of Kronos and of Hera his wife; of Poseidon and of Phoibos or Apollo; of Artemis and Demeter and Hermes; and how they dwelt in high Olympos, and how they loved and fought and strove one with another. And as he sang I said to myself, "Oh! that I had the gift of this man and could see as clearly as he does the forms of the divine ones and their very clothing. Then would I fashion such scenes in shining silver as should cause all men to wonder, and should make my name known to all parts of this our land of Mysia." But it is in my hands only that my talent lies and my brain cannot conceive things that my eyes have not seen.'

Then as he spoke the face of the old man became as though transfigured.

 'Only

'Only the things that you have seen?' he thundered forth. 'O, man, what greater beauty is there than those things that we see? Boy! give me my lyre,' and taking with trembling hands the instrument from the youth he struck its strings again and again until the sounds which he himself produced seemed to exercise a soothing effect upon him, and his sudden fury subsided. Then the sound of the lyre ceased and in a low but musical voice which in some way seemed to have a singing tone underlying it he began:

'Look around you, smith, and fashion what is known and familiar to you and not even the lame god Hephaistos can outrival you. Look upon the earth and fashion it, and upon the heavens and the sea and the tireless sun upon his journey round the earth, and the stars that fill the heavens at night, the Pleiades, the Hyades and the Bear, that men also call the Wain, that turneth in its place, and alone of all the stars sinks not into the ocean. Go you to Assos, that fair city of the plain, and join the marriage feast that follows the espousal of your friends, and fashion the bride as she is led from her chamber through the city while the bridal

song is sung. Look upon the young men as they posture in the dance and upon the matrons as they stand at their thresholds smiling at the sight. Or follow the folk as they gather in the place of assembly round about two men who may dispute anent the slaying of a man and the blood-price to be paid by the slayer. Mark how the folk divide themselves into two companies, cheering on the one or the other of the disputants as their sympathies lead them, and mark the heralds keeping order and staying the common folk from disturbing the deliberations of the elders as they sit in the fateful circle, each on a smooth stone seat, pondering on the judgment they shall give. These are common things, O smith, but when they are fashioned they become radiant in their beauty. Go talk to the people as they sit in the market-place. Learn from the fighting-men how the city was defended when the hostile army besieged it in the days when thou wert a stripling. How they left the old men and the women and the boys to guard the walls, while the men went forth and waged war with their enemies, lying in ambush perchance in the river bed where the cattle come down to the

 watering-place.

watering-place. How they lurked here until the herdsmen, recking naught of danger, came with their herds, playing carelessly upon their pipes, and were slain by the ambushed and their flocks seized. Learn from him how, before the herds could be driven to the city, the besiegers spurring their stamping horses, swept down upon the town-folk, and how the battle raged and Strife and Death joined in the mellay and wrought destruction on the mortal men. Fashion these things, O smith, and leave the gods of high Olympos to those who have seen and spoken to them, if such there be. Or, if these things be too hard for you, watch the herds of the farmer in the plain below, how they plough the fields from early dawn till dusky evening. See how the rich black soil is turned up under the iron-shod plough-share as the patient oxen drag it along the furrows for the third time, and when they reach the furthermost boundary of the field, each man will stop, and, wiping the trickling sweat from his brow with the back of one hand, will reach out the other for the cup of wine which the boy hands to him. Or watch later in the year the same men reaping their master's field;

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with the swathe falling in rows to the strokes of the sharp sickles, for the following binders to form into sheafs with twisted bands of straw. Or the gathering of the grapes in the vineyard. The maidens and youths laughing in their childish glee as they strip the black grapes from the vines twining around the gray sun-bleached poles, and bearing them away in wicker baskets, their feet keeping time to the song of the boy who makes music for them with sweet-toned viol. Fashion a herd of kine passing from the byre in the steading to pasture beside the slow-moving river with its border of wind-swept reeds. Mark how the kine are followed by the herdsmen with their dogs, fleet of foot and broad of chest, and how two lions seize upon the great bull, the leader of the herd, and how the young men gather around as the terrible beasts tear their way into the vitals of the bellowing bull and the fierce dogs, recognizing the kingship of the lions, shrink away and stand off, barking but afraid. Fashion this, O smith, or a pasture in a cool glen of the forest, with a flock of white sheep nibbling the short grass, and hard by the thatched huts of the shep-

 herd

herd and the bark-roofed sheep-folds. Or if these scenes seem too simple or too common follow the example of the great Daidalos the master sculptor of the world, when he wrought a piece for Ariadne, and haunt the dancing places when the youths and maidens meet and clasp one another's hands in the merry dance. Note the broidered linen garments of the girls and the close-fitting doublets of the striplings, the wreaths on the fair locks of the maidens and the golden daggers of the youths hanging from their silvern baldrics. Mark the lightness and freedom of their steps as they move in and out, treading the sinuous measures of the dance, falling apart one from another and anon meeting only to fall away again. Here are beautiful things to fashion, O smith, and things you may see whensoever the fancy takes you, and yet you moan that you know not how the gods and goddesses appear before each other. Fashion me scenes like these and not even the shield which Hephaistos wrought at the behest of Thetis for her son Achilles can compare with your work. Methinks, indeed, that shield must have been like to this, and of imagery no whit more strange

 and

and godlike. And now I thank you for your hospitality and for the opportunity you have given us to rest awhile in the cool shadows, and with these thanks must take my leave and journey onward towards the coast.'

The old man and the boy passed out of the hut, the smith with rustic courtesy leading the way until they reached the path. Here they left him, and as he watched them set out he sagely wagged his head and pondered, 'The old man can talk perchance, but I doubt if he can make songs like that one I heard at Assos last year.'

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But the blind Homer, leaning yet infirmly on the shoulder of the comely boy, went falteringly down the mountain side and passed out of sight.

THE OLD WORLD
35 B. C.

ALEXANDRIA

THE GIRDLE OF CLEOPATRA. WHICH TO HIS SORROW NEKU THE SILVERSMITH WROUGHT FOR HER IN HER GLORIOUS CITY OF ALEXANDRIA

Alexandria lay bathed in a flood of silvery moonlight, which changed and transmogrified all it touched, here softening and blurring the carved outlines of a Corinthian capital, there silhouetting into strongly-marked relief the severe outlines of an Egyptian pylon. It offered a curiously-blended confusion of styles, did this same Alexandria, when it lay exposed under the strong blaze of the midday sun instead of being mantled with the kindly obscurity of even a moonlit night. It was not that, as many of the world-known cities of our own time—a Rome, a Venice, or a Paris, for example—it traced its history in its succession of architectural fashions. A volume wherein is written their evolution from barbarism to civilization, their transit from beneath the sway of a

 dominant

dominant race to municipal freedom, or their mere passage from one epoch of time to another. Here was a city that, like the fabled palace of the Eastern story-teller, had sprung, as it might be, in one night from the sands of the desert at imperial Alexander's autocratic nod; and, despite the wealth of care and invention that had been lavished upon it, the most casual of observers could not fail to note the artificiality of its aspect. The regularity of its plan impressed at first with its grandiosity, but ended by wearying with the sense of monotony it imparted. The very medley of styles offered but little variety, the notes that were insistently struck being only two, Greek and Egyptian; the first the signature of that dynasty which, after giving new life to the dying nation, had in its turn sunk in subjection to Rome, that master of the world; the second written by the race to which centuries of tyranny had taught the lesson of servility, but which even in its death-throes had forced its science, its learning, even its art upon those who held it in thrall. Thus it was that the lotos-flower was twined with the acanthus-leaf and Corinthian capitals were found side by side with

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the inverted bells of the Egyptian columns, while the sculptured pediments and colonnaded fronts of the temple of Hermes faced the gigantic and gloomy pile reared to the glory of the Egyptian god Hathor. The two wide avenues which ran, the one from east to west, the other from north to south, dividing the city into four quarters, formed the most distinctive feature of its plan. Bordered by marble colonnades, guarded by rows of crouching sphinx-like statues stretching on either side as far as the eye could reach, paved with huge square blocks of granite for the wheeled traffic in the centre, with sidewalks of smaller squares of hard limestone, even those great road-builders of the world, the Romans, never produced more imposing causeways. Branching out from these main avenues were the streets running at right angles to each other and dividing each quarter up into small blocks. These also were well and smoothly paved with stone. It was as the chief emporium of the world's commerce that Alexandria gained her notoriety. From her gates countless caravans crossed the Lybian desert in all directions, while from this the noblest port of the

 Mediterranean,

Mediterranean, navies of merchant vessels sailed through the Pillars of Hercules northward and westward to the tin-producing isles of distant Britain, and southward and eastward, encircling the vast African continent to India and her island dependencies of the East. The port itself had room along its miles of stone-faced quays for countless ships which, guided by the famous light on the Isle of Pharos, found here safe anchorage as well as a ready market for the shipmen's wares.

As the commercial centre of three continents Alexandria was the most cosmopolitan city of ancient times, and along its water front and in its streets, types of the world's nations mingled and talked and chaffered over their wares. The sturdy Roman shouldered the pliant Greek, the stately Arab wrapped his burnous about him as he contemptuously gave place to the fire-worshipping Persian, the cunning Syrian spied his possible prey in the stalwart, shaggy Gaul, while the alert Phœnician spat at his ancient enemy the Jew, who took the insult with a philosophic shrug, secure in his consciousness that it would be dearly paid for in the forthcoming bargain. All day long they

 strove

strove one against the other for mastery in their commerce; but when the evening came they gave themselves up to the pursuit of their pleasures, coarse and riotous in the case of the barbarians, sensuously refined in that of the Greeks and a majority of the Romans. As might have been expected, it was in the Brucheum or Greek quarter that the revelry attained its greatest height, for it was here that the foreign nations chiefly congregated. Surrounded by a high wall, it formed a sort of city within a city, dignified by the presence of the huge palace of the Ptolemys with its luxurious audience chambers and vast outbuildings, of the temple of Kronos and Isis, and of the Library whose fame has descended down a score of centuries to our own time as the vast storehouse of the learning of the childhood of the world. Here, too, was the Alexandrine Museum, a school, a monastery and an academy in one, where at the expense of the Ptolemys lived in ease and comfort poets, philosophers and men of science. Many mansions of wealthy Egyptians as well as Greeks were to be found here also, each surrounded by its elaborately laid-out garden and

 shouldered

shouldered by the huts and hovels of its meaner neighbours, each one of which, however, had its flat roof to serve as the sleeping apartment of the family in the sweltering heat of summer nights. Clustered about the water front were the meaner streets, devoted to the tradesmen and mechanics, the wine shops and the homes of the dancing girls. Keen-eyed tradesmen sat at the entrances to the dark, evil-smelling shops piled high with fabrics from Eastern looms, or the products of native craftsmen; the clang of the coppersmith's hammer or the buzz of the potter's wheel mingled with the wailing cry of the itinerant water and fruit-sellers throughout the working hours, while after night-fall the narrow streets became the stage for the wandering street performers, dancers, acrobats, story-tellers or musicians, as the case might be.

It was around a snake-charmer that a crowd of curious onlookers had gathered, nudging each other and gaping in wonderment as the Indian performer put his sluggish pets through their unwilling performance. He had taken up his stand in front of the shop of Neku the silver worker, who stood at his open door gazing with even more

 interest

interest than his neighbours, for the graceful curves of the cobras, as they writhed and contorted themselves in sullen obedience to the movements of the light wand with which their master directed their movements, appealed to his artistic sense. The sound of a movement in the living room of his dwelling, which lay beyond the work shop, seemed to recall to him the fact that in his solitary enjoyment of the snake-charmer's performance he was selfish. Why should his little wife not share it with him? 'Alona!' he called, 'Alona! Come quickly and see the serpents dancing.' The young wife came running joyously, for with the fondness of her race for simple pleasures and amusements she found in the panorama of street life, that was always unrolling itself before their door, her chief amusement and recreation. Although her face was hidden under a linen veil she gave with her girlish outline and graceful carriage the impression of prettiness and youthfulness, while plain and simple as was her dress, as befitted the wife of an artisan, she wore a girdle of wrought silver which the richest and most powerful dame in the entire Brucheum would not have disdained. With the

 light

light laugh of anticipatory pleasure she came to the door and stood by her husband peering at the sight from over the edge of her veil. The pair made a comely picture as they stood there in the flickering light of the torch carried by the snake-charmer's assistant. He with his reddish brown skin showing from beneath the mantle cast carelessly over his bare shoulders; she leaning up against him with an air of appeal as though for the protection of the muscular right arm which he had passed around her waist.

Old Nefer the baker, who was standing at his door, which he nearly filled up with his immense girth, caught sight of the youthful pair and smiled benignly, as he nodded a greeting, albeit he muttered beneath his breath: 'You spoil the girl, brother Neku, and when you are my age you'll have found out your mistake. Silver girdles, indeed, for the wife of a workingman!'

Others, too, seemed to have noticed the unusual adornment, for a woman in the crowd nudged her escort, a soldierly-looking man whose haughty bearing seemed at variance with his plebeian attire, which was apparently that of a groom to some

Roman patrician. 'See, my Antony,' said the woman. 'See the girdle that creature there presumes to wear. By Osiris I vow it is fit even for me. Saw you ever the white gold more cunningly wrought and fashioned?' Then turning to one of the crowd, evidently an inhabitant of the neighbourhood: 'The women of your quarter, cousin,' she said in the familiar dialect of the lower classes, 'must have rich lovers to furnish them with girdles such as that on the hussy yonder.' 'Nay, cousin,' replied the fellow, a sturdy blacksmith, whose naked shoulders glistened under the torch-light, 'she is no light of love that, but an honest workman's wife. Pity if the silversmith cannot spend his spare time working a girdle for his wife but strangers from another quarter,' and he sent a hostile glance in the direction of the man the woman had addressed as Antony, 'must try and take away a decent woman's character.'

'Pooh! cousin! If she has no lover the more fool she, for she looks as though she might have a pleasing face. But tell me about this husband of hers, for you seem to know him.'

'Know him? Why I have known Neku since he

was no higher than my knee and I know that in the whole of Alexandria there is no silversmith to compare to him. Beshrew me if our lady Cleopatra could only see his work his fortune would be made.' 'You think so? Well, stranger things have happened,' and with a word to her companion the stranger elbowed her way through the crowd and passed into the silversmith's house. The blacksmith grinned as he followed her with his eyes. 'You may wear the dancing girl's dress and you may speak the speech of the quarter, but a blind man could see thee for what thou art, Cleopatra. I had not believed till now the tales they tell of thee and thy Roman lover, how in disguise you seek amusement and relief among the common folk of the port. 'Stranger things have happened,' quoth she? Aye! by this time perchance the poor wench's girdle is decking the hips of Egypt's Queen,' and he turned away with a coarse laugh.

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Alona, the wife of Neku the silversmith, stood at the door which separated her husband's work-

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shop from the living room of their little home, and looked at the silver worker as he knelt on the clay floor with an iron brazier glowing with red-hot charcoal before him.

'And so you believe that the bold-faced woman who forced her way in on us a month ago was in truth our lady Cleopatra? And you are wasting time and material on a girdle for her. Oh! how stupid you men are, to be sure!'

'Nay, Alona, my pigeon,' said Neku, in his soft, pleasant voice, as he arranged some fragments of silver wire on a disc of copper which lay on the burning coals. 'Did she not show me the royal seal on an emerald well-nigh as large as the palm of my hand which she wore hung on a chain of yellow gold around her neck? Besides, 'tis the common talk of the city that she and my lord Antony are wont to sally forth at dusk disguised as common folk and taste the pleasures of the town in this strange fashion.'

'Well, tell me once more what she said to you when she followed you into your work room here and shut the door in my face forsooth, as though a husband should have any secrets from

 his

his wife, though they are only six months married.'

'I have told you a dozen times, Alona, what happened. The lady first disclosed to me who she was, and after I had made obeisance to her she bade me show to her the girdle I made for you, which you were wearing that night.'

'Yes!' broke in Alona. 'You came running to me and without as much as 'by your leave,' or 'with your leave' dragged the girdle from me and took it to display to your dancing girl.'

'Hush, Alona! I tell you she is no dancing girl, but our Queen. She deigned to admire the girdle and bade me bring it to the palace next day when I should receive two talents of gold for it, but I, remembering how I had wrought it for you, and how it was my first gift to you, but not daring to refuse her behest, craved her forgiveness and said:

'Royal Cleopatra, hearken to me. It is not meet that you should wear aught save the best that your servant can fashion.' 'Silversmith,' she replied, 'it is not possible for you to work aught more beautiful than this girdle.' 'Nay, Royal One,' I said;

said; 'give me one short month and you shall see a girdle to which this shall be but as the moon to the sun.' 'I do not believe you, silversmith,' said she; 'but if perchance you speak the truth bring the girdle to me when it is finished and four talents of gold shall be your reward.' If you had seen her and heard her speak, Alona, you would have doubted as little as I did that she was the Queen, and that for a glance from those glorious eyes men have laid not a mere silver girdle but their very lives at her feet.'

'Mayhap,' said his wife; 'but I did not see those eyes you speak of, and I have a shrewd suspicion that if you take the girdle to the Palace expecting to see the Queen you will be scourged from the gate by her guards and it will be well with you if they take not from you your month's work, to say nothing of the pound or more of white gold for which you still owe the Greek trader, and give you in return naught but blows or revilings.'

'You are a true woman, Alona! But to-morrow will tell us which of the twain is right or wrong. The girdle is well-nigh finished, as you see.'

 'Is

'Is this it?' queried Alona, as she took up from his side the long girdle of dazzlingly bright silver. 'Why, you spoke truth, husband mine, though like your Queen or your dancing girl, whichsoever she be, I could not believe that anything finer than my own girdle could be made by mortal man. But tell me, Neku, what manner of work call you this? 'Tis like to nothing I have seen you fashion before.'

Neku's brown eyes sparkled with the gratified vanity of the artist. 'So you have noticed it?' he said. 'Tis a trick I learned from the Persian Hytaspes. Though himself a merchant and no worker in metals, he has watched those of his own and other countries and in especial among those who dwell at the mouth of the Indus. Now, little wife, you must bear with me while I tell you how I have fashioned each of the bosses or clasps of which it is made up. First, I had to form my silver into wire of varying thicknesses, and this, as you know, is done by drawing it while heated through these holes in this piece of black basalt, thus making it smaller and smaller by degrees. Of these wires, cut into pieces of the right length, I form my pattern.'

 'But

'But these little seeds, as it were, Neku,' said Alona, interested as a child in her husband's description; 'these are not made of wire, else how should they be so round, tiny as they are.'

'No,' said Neku. 'To make those I melt my silver in this little pot, then pour it into this jar of powdered charcoal, and when it is cold, look you, it has formed itself into these grains. This was a hint I had from the Persian. But when with my twisted wires and my silver granules I have formed my pattern, I seal it in its place on this disc of copper with this gum from the Lybian desert; then where one little wire touches another I place a pinch of powdered tincal which comes to us from the land of Thabat by way of the Indus. Then a grain of this solder and then the heat of the brazier. The tincal melts and disappears, the solder melts and runs between the wires, and when I have taken it from the brazier and the heat has left it, see, the wires are joined together so that none can separate them. Then have I but to clean it in this jar of sharp vinegar and after in running water, and there is one part of the girdle finished and ready to be fastened with silver rings to its neighbour.'

'I think

'I think you must be the cleverest man in the quarter, Neku,' said Alona; 'for it sounds so simple in the telling, yet what eye saw work so intricate or complicated, and nineteen of these besides the clasp to form a girdle. My poor husband, no wonder you have worked from dawn to dark these thirty days past. Now I begin to think you must be right, since for no one save a queen could you have worked so glorious a work as this. But, Neku, take it not to the palace tomorrow as you purpose. I know not why; but something tells me that evil awaits you there.'

'Nay, lass!' with a smile, 'unless you call four talents of gold an evil!'

* * * * * * * *

Along the sphinx-bordered avenue Neku the silversmith took his way towards the hour of sundown on the following day, bearing before him on a sort of tray, formed of plaited rushes, the girdle which had occupied his thoughts and his energies for so long. Wrapped in its coverings of thin silk-like papyrus, only its outlines were visible; but Neku's imagination and memory pierced through

 this

this outer wrapping, and as he strode along his mind's eye gloated as it were on the delicate filigree work, with its intricate whirls and twists and interlaced circlings. He had come straight from his shop, strung to such a pitch by the excitement of seeing his work at last completed that he never stayed to throw over his shoulders the light cloak which men of his class wore when going abroad. In his working dress, therefore, which only by courtesy could be called a dress at all, he strode along the stately avenue, thronged as it then was by city-folk on their way to enjoy the cooling breezes on the shores of Lake Mareotis, and bent his steps to the marble pylon which formed the entrance to the royal palace and marked its semi-sacred character. The Greek mercenary in charge of the guard at the gate consulted a papyrus roll scrawled over with various memoranda which he took from his bosom. He finally came upon what he sought.

'Aye,' he surlily admitted, 'you speak the truth. 'Admit one Neku a silversmith when he comes—by order of the Queen.' Pass, Neku, and state your business to the worthy Neithotep who is in charge

 of

of the Queen's apartments.' The silversmith's way led him through a dozen or more courts, each surrounded by its colonnade of gorgeously-coloured columns and paved with blocks of hard white stone so cunningly fitted together that the joints were imperceptible even on close scrutiny, and brought him at last to the doorway leading to the Queen's apartments, where sat in slumberous meditation a corpulent old man who slowly opened his eyes as Neku's timid query fell on his ears and piped out in a falsetto voice:

'Canst see the Royal Cleopatra, my fine fellow? That depends neither on you nor on me, but on our lady herself. You could not have come at a fitting time, but you must choose the very hour when I am resting my weary limbs after the fatigues of the day. Since day-break it has been 'Neithotep here!' 'Neithotep there!' until my very bones ache with weariness.' He grumbled on, making, however, no offer to rise. But Neku was an Egyptian and had come not unprovided for such an emergency. He took from his waistband a silver coin, slipped it in a matter-of-fact fashion into the eunuch's palm and awaited

 events.

events. The needful spur had evidently been supplied, for Neithotep rolled off his bench, squeaked out, 'Tarry here, silversmith, and I will see what can be done,' and disappeared into the recesses of the palace. It was half an hour before he returned, and the sun by this time had sunk below the horizon, leaving the western sky ablaze with the glory of the yellow after-glow. 'Our lady awaits you. Cross the court of the lions, ascend the staircase that fronts you on the thither side thereof, and you will find her awaiting you,' he growled out, and sank back once more on his bench.

Alone and brooding Cleopatra sat beneath a brightly-painted awning on the roof of the inner palace. The golden urus, symbol of Egyptian sovereignty, confined her raven tresses round her shapely head, but left them free to fall in careless abandonment over her white shoulders. Resting on the palm of one small hand, her face, with its aquiline nose, its sensuously-rounded chin and full red lips, seemed to fade away, as it were, from view in the radiance of those marvelous eyes which blazed from under the straight dark brows.

 Somewhat

Somewhat too deeply sunken perhaps for perfect beauty, they held within their luminous depths so much of mystery and inscrutable allurement and of wantonness, that the face with all its loveliness of colour and of line became a mere setting, as it were, to these two dark and changeable jewels. Of what she brooded over as she sat there in the waning light, whether of her beloved Cæsar done to death so far away from her, or that newer lover Antony, whether of her own land of Khem or Egypt, which thanks to her and her unbridled passions and selfish luxury, was slowly being blotted out of the map of nations, or of that far-off Rome where she had been so hated, but which she loved so well; whether of these or those she pondered as she sat there motionless who could tell? Certainly not our poor Neku as he climbed the stately stairway, holding before him his cherished girdle, which when he reached the queenly presence he laid at the dainty feet, prostrating himself in patient humbleness as he waited for the Queen to speak. Long he lay there till at length the musical voice was heard.

'Ah! I had well-nigh forgotten. 'Tis the silver-

 smith

smith with the girdle I was foolish enough to bid him fashion for me. I do not think I want it now, so take it away and disturb me not. Yet stay; let me look at the foolish toy.'

So Neku, trembling in his fearful eagerness, tore the papyrus wrapping from the girdle and displayed it in all its white and dazzling purity.

'By Osiris, 'tis indeed of some worth. In truth, silversmith, I never saw more cunning craftsmanship. You were not wrong then, for this exceeds that other work of yours as the sun exceeds the moon in brightness. Leave it, man. Take this tablet to the royal treasury and you will receive your pay. Four talents of gold, was it not?'

'Aye, gracious lady,' said Neku, as she wrote with a gold stylus on a waxen tablet mounted on a cedarn block. She signed it by impressing on it her seal with the incised gem of her finger ring and nestled into her silken cushions as she waved him away with an imperious gesture. No sooner had Neku turned his back on her before she bent forward and with eyes ablaze with gratified pleasure, lifted the girdle from the ground and laying it in her lap, bent over it to scan more carefully the delicacy

 of

of the workmanship. She was occupied thus when a manly voice caused her to start and look upwards. 'A new jewel? Why what an unconscionable itching for gauds is yours, my Cleopatra. What is it this time? Pearls, belike?'

'Nay, not so, my Antony. I am not *always* athirst,' and they both laughed in joyous remembrance. ''Tis merely a girdle of silver, but beshrew me if mortal eye ever saw its fellow or is like to see its equal again. Others, even your beloved Fulvia,' and her eyes gleamed with hate, 'can deck themselves with pearls if they have a few poor sesterces to exchange for them, but what other woman in the world has the wit to buy for a paltry talent or two of gold a girdle such as this, which must remain without a rival.'

'O, you women!' laughed Antony, 'you women! But it seems to me, my Cleopatra, your wit is not so keen as usual in this matter. If this silversmith of yours has so far exceeded the girdle which caught your eye the night of our foolish frolic in the city, what is to prevent him exceeding this of yours by just so much again and selling it to some other lover of wrought work?'

 'You

'You say truth, my Antony, as ever. Here! Within there, Chryssa!' and she clapped her hands together thrice. A young Greek girl came running swiftly at the summons. 'Girl,' said Cleopatra, 'hasten to the treasury, where you will find an Egyptian, a silversmith. I know not his name. Tell him to return here on the instant, bringing with him the tablet I gave to him. Hasten! begone!' A few minutes later and Neku stood once more before the Queen, who had resumed her languid pose. 'I have but one thing to ask you, silversmith,' she cooed, 'is it possible for you to do finer and better work than appears in this girdle of yours?' ''Tis this way, O Royal One,' answered Neku, his artistic temperament fired by the query, so that he forgot his fear and spoke with a freedom he had not dared to use before. 'With each difficulty overcome by the craftsman, the next becomes easier in the conquering. Never have I done so fine a piece of work as this; but if the gods grant me strength and life and health, I hope to do many a one that will be finer even than this,' and he swelled with the naive pride and vanity of the true artist.

 ''Tis

'Tis well,' said Cleopatra, softly, 'give me back the tablet and I will add to your reward,' and she hastily scribbled a line or two on the smooth surface of the wax when Neku had handed it to her. 'Now away to the treasury, silvermith, and see how Cleopatra pays those who tell the truth to her,' and once more she fell back among her cushions.

* * * * * * * *

The royal litter swept through the canopied gateway. Upon it Antony lay reclining with his beloved Cleopatra, a sneer at himself for falling so soon into such effeminately Oriental customs curling his handsome lip. He had raised himself slightly and with his chin supported on one hand broodingly surveyed the scene around him. Something attracted his attention as they passed under the towering pylon-like gateway, which was the entrance to the city. Turning to his companion he said with a sudden flash of eagerness. 'See! That blind man there—with only one hand and supported by a young, and by Hercules, a pretty woman! Strange, is it not, but he curiously

 resembles

resembles that young silversmith who wrought this girdle for you,' and he touched the silver girdle the Queen wore over her delicate silken robes. 'I never forget a face I have seen once and I know the man again for certain. 'Tis almost worth while having enquiries made, for a month ago the man had two hands and could see as well as you or I.'

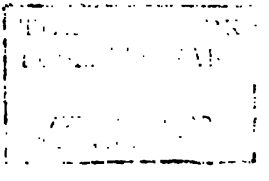
'Trouble not yourself, my Antony,' said Cleopatra, in soft, cooing tones. 'Remember how you scoffed at me when I said I had the man's masterpiece. Your words gave me an idea. I added somewhat to the man's reward and I dare swear now that he will never work a finer girdle than this, though he was rash enough to boast that he could do so. It was so easy, too! Just an order to my chief eunuch to blind and main him, and the thing was done.'

Antony gazed at her in something approaching to horror, but lifting her hand lazily as she lay by his side she gently patted his cheek and looked at him with languorous affection. The frown disappeared from his brow and he too smiled in his turn.

'My Cleopatra!' was all he said.

THE OLD WORLD
1496 A. D.

NUREMBERG



IN OLD NUREMBERG. A STORY OF YOUTH AND AGE, SHOWING HOW THE EMPEROR'S PRIZE WAS LOST AND AFTERWARDS WAS WON AGAIN

'Hans,' said old Jacob Peller, the silversmith of Nuremberg, 'I am going out for an hour to confer with my good friend the Burgomaster Pirkheimer. While I am gone you will finish hammering up the body of that bowl with which I purpose to compete for the prize our Emperor Maximilian (may the saints preserve him), has offered for the finest piece of silver work produced by a Nuremberg craftsman. When I return I will set to work myself and lay out the design for the chasing thereof. I have a pleasing conceit in my head, of vine leaves and grapes and merry little Bacchantes that I flatter myself it will be hard to beat,' and the paunchy little man, with his bald head and red, puffy face, waddled out of the workshop with a last admonitory gesture to the fair-haired sensitive-

faced

faced lad, who was bending over the work-bench placed so that it received all the light from the wide casement which ran down one side of the long low room and from which the wooden shutters were thrown far back. His master gone, Hans turned to the bench muttering, 'His Bacchantes indeed! I know those Bacchantes. Fat, pudgy little brutes. True children of their father, the great Jacob Peller. Ugh!' and with compressed lips and heightened colour he turned to the work to which his attention had been so roughly directed.

Of all the minor processes connected with the silversmith's art, 'hammering-up' is surely the most monotonous and wearying. It is the technical term applied to the method by which, thanks to the excessive ductility of the metal, a cup, a bowl, even a long-necked vase, may be wrought into form from the flat silver plate by repeated blows of a hammer alone. By fractions of an inch the apparently tough and unyielding metal pays obedience to the compelling strokes of the hammer, and it is the frank recognition of this fact and this inherent nature of silver that differentiates the work of the

artist from that of the mere workman. But the hammering-up of a sheet into partially spherical form, to serve as a foundation for the delicate hammer-work and chasing of the decoration, wherein alone the artist-sense finds a congenial field, is a monotonous, irksome operation, calculated to fret and irritate the artistic temperament should the craftsman possess that somewhat afflictive commodity. Hans, however, worked steadily on until the bells of St. Laurence, hard by, told him that his master had been gone at least an hour. Then he slipped the great grey bowl off the round anvil, laid down his hammer, and with an enthusiastic sparkle in his eye, bent down and picked up what was apparently a bundle of dirty rags from underneath the bench. His long, thin, nervous fingers soon unwound the plebeian covering and there stood revealed upon the three-legged stand, which he had dragged forth to receive it, a most exquisite chalice, fashioned, however, not out of silver, but of the red wax which for generations has been the favorite medium in which sculptors have delighted to model their sketch designs. Even in the wax the symmetrical

 beauty

beauty of the chalice was apparent, lying altogether as it did in the exquisite proportions and the subtle grace of the curves. The bowl of the cup itself was plain almost to bareness, save for a band of incised ornament around the rim that in the exquisite minuteness was well-nigh gem-like. But it was the 'knop' or conventional swelled-out portion of the stem, between the base and the bowl, by which the chalice was to be held, that constituted its chief glory. On the hexagonal surface, not much larger than a good-sized walnut, the craftsman had wrought a representation of the Tree of Life, whose rugged, gnarled stem and roots, treated with the perfection of decorative handling, formed the lower portion of the stem and the spreading base of the cup. Set in the twining branches were six tiny panels, on each of which was pictured an incident in the Passion of our Lord. Almost microscopical as were these little bas-reliefs there was a breadth and dignity in the modelling that raised them to the highest plane of creative art. Hans gazed long and intently at the chalice, and with a tiny bone modelling tool, which he took from his breast, hovered, as he passed over the

surface with what seemed a caress of the tool, depressing this surface and forcing that up slightly, altering the expression of a face here, or adjusting more particularly the fall of a fold of drapery there. So intent was he that he did not hear the door of the room open or see the pretty little face, framed in smooth golden hair, peeping out from beneath the snowy cap with its silver wing-pieces, which peered archly into the room. Finally there entered the owner of this pretty face, a young girl dressed in the picturesque Bavarian town-maiden's costume, with its flowing skirt and bodice laced over a fine lawn chemisette. She had no scruples about interrupting the artistic reverie, but tripping across the room she stood on tip-toe behind the lad and putting her chubby little hands, hardened and roughened by the house-work which was the portion in those days of the daughters of even the richest burghers, before the lad's eyes, she cried with a ripple of laughter.

'If you guess who it is, Hans, I'll forgive you for wasting your master's time.'

''Tis you, Greta, of course,' said the youth, making a mock struggle to free himself, 'but I don't think

 you'd

you'd tell tales to your father even if I didn't guess aright.'

'Oh, you don't know me, sir,' said Greta, letting her hands fall and moving so that she faced her sweetheart with her round arms akimbo, 'I can be as spiteful, if need be, as—as—as—the widow Gentz, who is always making eyes at you when she sees you at mass in St. Sebald's. But I want you to be serious, for I have something very serious to say to you. At breakfast this morning my father let slip a hint of a wonderful plan he has in his mind, and what do you think it is?'

'I'm sure I don't know,' said Hans, 'unless it be that he has invented a new Bacchante. I'm sure it's about time.'

'I don't know what you're talking about, you and your Bacchante,' said the young girl, pettishly. 'Perhaps you won't smile so, when I tell you that he plans to marry me to Michael Pirkheimer, the son of his gossip, old Sebald.'

'You're joking, Greta,' said Hans, changing colour; 'but, now I come to think of it, it is to old Sebald's he has gone this very morning, doubtless to talk over the detestable scheme. But, Greta,

you won't marry Michael, will you? Why, he is detested by all the young men of Nuremberg for his meanness and his evil ways. Besides, he squints and has one shoulder higher than the other.'

'Aye, lad, but Old Sebald has a business better even than my father's, and Michael will be his sole heir. And you, my poor boy, are still but an apprentice to my father, and have not a farthing of your own. In the eyes of old men a bag of gold hides a squint or even a crooked shoulder.'

'But, Greta, if I could only win the prize the Emperor offers, my fortune would be made. I could ask your father for your hand, and I dare swear he would not refuse. You know it is town-talk that our Emperor will appoint the winner of the prize silversmith to the household of Prince Philip when he marries the Infanta Joanna next month.'

'But how are you to win the prize, you foolish boy?'

'By this!' and Hans's face lit up with the enthusiasm of the artist as he pointed to the wax model on the bench.

'Oh Hans! How beautiful! And did you really fashion this yourself? Oh! You are right! It *must*

win the prize! Never have I seen anything more beautiful. But when did you do this? And why is it only in that ugly red wax? How grand it would look in silver!'

'There's the rub,' said Hans, his enthusiasm replaced by sudden dejection. 'I have done this in my own time after the day's work was done; but alas, I cannot use your father's silver, and how am I to buy any for myself? You know I receive but ten florins a year, two suits of clothes and my board and lodging until my term of apprenticeship is at an end. No! It is hopeless.'

'I don't know about that,' said Greta, who had been wrinkling her white brow as though trying to solve some problem in her mind. How much silver would it take, Hans?'

'Some twenty ounces, at least,' he replied.

'Twenty ounces,' she said, reflectively, 'and may it be in any form, or must it be silver plates?' she asked.

'What does it matter?' said Hans, pettishly, 'I have no silver of any sort. But as you ask, it matters not so long as it be silver, for Wenzel Schauffelein the smelter will exchange plates for

silver wares of any description, weighing the one against the other, and deducting but a twentieth part by weight for the exchange.'

'Then wait but a moment, Hans,' said the girl, 'and you shall see what you shall see. I'm the little mouse, lad, who's going to gnaw asunder the bonds that hold her lion-hearted boy in the toils,' and she ran out of the room, leaving Hans gazing vacantly in wonderment. He had not long to wait, for in a few moments the door of the work-room burst open and Greta rushed in breathless and carrying in her hands something which jingled curiously as she ran. She threw her burden down on the bench with a bang, exclaiming:

'There, Hans! There's your silver, and if it helps you to win the prize I'm only too willing that you should have it.'

The astonished Hans saw lying there a heap of silver ornaments and jewelry. A heavy girdle clasp, two shoulder straps and buckles, a long chain, a comb, two hair-pins and some three or four bracelets.

Deprived of its silver shoulder straps her bodice had slipped down so that one brown little shoulder

 peeped

peeped from the snowy enfoldments of the chemisette. Her neatly coiled hair, too, no longer supported by its comb, had fallen in pretty disorder down her back, but her flushed face and sparkling eyes betrayed her state of nervous excitement to be such that no thought of her dishevelled appearance crossed her mind. She could only ejaculate:

'Take them, Hans! They are my very own. The chain and comb were my mother's, the clasps and bracelets my god-father gave me. Even my father has no word to say as to what I shall do with them. Take them to Wenzel Schauffelein and exchange them for the silver you need for your chalice, and never say a girl can't find out the way!'

II

The moon looked down on the sleeping town of Nuremberg, one fine autumn night in the year 1496, with a cold, contemptuous stare. She stared down with an unwinking gleam on the thousand or more high-pitched and quaintly-outlined roofs, covered with the reddish-brown tiles, which took on themselves an empurpled bloom in her white

radiance. She touched with her gaze the sluggish stream of the little river Pegnitz, as it took its lazy way through the town, and silvered its sullied surface, save where the many bridges and the more plebeian "hinterbrücken" threw deep shadows across its path. She glanced at, and glancing gave ethereal beauty to, the twin soaring spires of St. Laurence's and a more delicate tracery to the sculptured front of the Frauenkirche; she redeemed from sordidness the Henker Thurm or Hangman's Tower, gave grace to the prison tower of the frowning castle, which dominated the town and was known to all Bavaria as the Lug ins Land, or 'Peep o'er the Land,' Tower, and added fairness even to the Schone Brunnen, that pride of the mediæval as it is of the latter-day Nuremberg. All this the moon could do, and did; but it was for the cheerily twinkling star, just peering over the brow of the tiny hill, at whose foot the town lay cradled, to take a kindly interest in what it saw that was apart from the cold, chaste indifference of the moon.

It was the star who kept unwearying watch over the honest burghers and their families, over the

 burgomaster,

burgomaster, Von Culmbach, snoring an obese snore between two feather-beds, as well as over the wearied hostler, snatching an hour or two's slumber on a truss of straw, before dawn brought a renewal of his labours in the stable-yard of that bustling inn, Zum Grünen Weinstock or The Green Vine. It was not the moon, but the star which night after night for some three months had peered in through the heart-shaped opening in the casement-shutter of Jacob Peller's work-shop, where young Hans, by the indifferent light of a smoky oil lamp, was fashioning in silver the daring creation he had shown to Greta as a red-wax model. The star had taken the friendliest of interest in the work. It had seen him take a sheet of the silver he had procured from Wenzel Schauffelein and hammer it up into the rough shape of the bowl. Another smaller bowl he worked in the same manner to serve as a foundation, as it were, for the circular foot. Then on these two roughly formed half-spheres he had traced in black, the main lines of his design. His next step was to place them over a snarling-iron, which is a long horizontal arm of wrought-iron ending in an

 upright

upright protuberance or knob, with a polished face. Against this knob the inner surface of the rounded silver is pressed, and the further end of the iron arm is struck with a hammer. The vibration causes the knob to strike the silver a succession of slight blows, by which it is raised outwards, or *repoussé*, so as to roughly assume the outline of the pattern. Into the bowl of the chalice and the foot, thus hammered into form, Hans now poured melted pitch. When this was hardened he took his chasing tools, which were in effect tiny chisels, and began to chase the fine lines and details of his design on the protuberances raised by the snarling-iron. Up to this point his work had been merely that of the intelligent workman. As he took the chasing tool in hand the craftsman became the artist. Almost imperceptibly the design under the repeated blows of his little punches grew into being, the soft metal not being in any way cut away or removed, but merely displaced from one part of the surface to another. It was only now, however, that the full beauty of the design became manifest and that the joy of the creative artist was his. The knop, with its intricate little panels, he formed after the same

 fashion,

fashion, hammering it up, however, in two halves, which when the chasing was almost completed were soldered together. The stem also was beaten out of a flat sheet into cylindrical form, the edges being imperceptibly joined. Finally all the sections, the bowl, the knop, the stem and the foot, the pitch being first melted out of them, were soldered together in the same fashion, and there only remained the polishing and the finishing touches to be given.

And the star agreed with Hans that the chalice was very good, and that if it did not win the prize, the Emperor and his chamberlain, who were to adjudicate upon the articles submitted in competition, must, despite their high and lofty station, be strangely ignorant of the nature of fine silverwork. Now, nothing remained but to carry the chalice to the Town Hall, where it must take its chance with the score or more bowls, platters and cups upon which the Nuremberg silversmiths had been hard at work for the past three months. Simple as this part of the affair seemed to be, it yet had given Hans infinitely more concern than the design or even the craftsmanship of the chalice itself.

According to the Emperor's proclamation the competitive works were to be delivered by the workmen themselves at the Castle between the hours of ten o'clock and noon on the 12th day of October, in the year of grace 1496. Now, old Jacob kept so close a watch on the outgoings and incomings of his apprentice that Hans had felt that not even the half-hour or so required to climb the steep road to the Castle and back could be taken by him without his master's knowledge; this meant an inevitable explanation and the discovery of his secret. Luck, however, seemed to be with the boy. That very afternoon Jacob had announced with a superfluity of snarls and groans that the gout or 'gutta,' as the old Court physician Von Bergen termed it, had so settled in his right knee that he could not walk across the room, much less climb the steep hill to the Castle. 'There is no help for it, Hans,' he growled. 'You must e'en put on your best jerkin in the morning, spruce yourself up and take up my Bacchante bowl to the Castle, explaining to the warder that only illness of the most serious nature has prevented me from appearing in person.'

 'Certainly,'

'Certainly,' thought Hans, 'the saints are fighting for me. It will be as easy to take two pieces as one to the Castle and Master Jacob need know nothing about it.'

So he was very well content to put out his lamp and lie down on the truckle bed, which he dragged out from beneath the work-bench, there to dream of the glories and honours which should be showered on his head when he had gained the Emperor's prize. The first white light of the dawn was chasing away the murky shadows from the nooks and corners of the oak-beamed workshop, and causing the quaintly-shaped lead quarrels of the wide casement window to stand out in sharp silhouettes, when Hans awoke and stretched himself. His morning toilet was of the simplest, a dash of cold water and a rub with a coarse linen towel and he was ready to give a last polish and touch to the bowl and the chalice, and to swathe them carefully in woolen cloths before carrying them to the Castle. Luckily, Master Jacob, whose gout was worse rather than better, did not appear at the frugal breakfast prepared by Greta and enjoyed by Hans with his boyish appetite, so the

two young people were able to talk unrestrainedly of the chalice and its chances of success. Thus it happened that by eight o'clock the lad was on his way up the steep hill to the Castle with a precious bundle under each arm. The warder, grumbling at being disturbed over his morning mug of beer, took the silver from him, paying, as Hans could not help but notice, scant attention to the elaborate excuse he made for Master Jacob's failure to attend in person.

'It matters not,' he had said, 'I know the worthy Master Peller, and if he suffers from that accursed gutta, he has my sympathy. 'Tis but a week ago since I was myself flat on my back with the same devil's complaint. But give me the gew-gaws, lad, and I will take them straight to His Serenity's Secretary, who has this matter in hand, and I will tell him they come from Master Jacob Peller.'

'No sir,' stammered poor Hans, in his nervous eagerness. 'Only one is from my master. This tall one wrapped in the red drugget is from me myself. Hans Frey is my name, good sir, Master Jacob's apprentice.'

But the warder was somewhat deaf, as well as gouty and irritable into the bargain: 'It matters not what your name is, boy,' he grumbled, 'you youngsters always want to push yourselves forward. It is your master with whom we concern ourselves on this occasion, not his apprentice,' and still grumbling at the impertinence of boys in general, and of this silversmith's cub in particular, he took his way up the winding stone stairway, which led to the Secretary's room, with the two bundles of silver. Hans turned away with a light heart. Doubtless, however, he would not have whistled so blithely, as he hastened down the hill into the town, if he had known that his precious chalice had been delivered with such a blundered-up message on the part of the warder that it was docketed in the Secretary's angular script: 'The alternative work submitted by Jacob Peller, silversmith of Nuremberg.'

III

The next time Hans took his way to the Castle it was in a far different frame of mind. Although he was walking side by side with his beloved Greta, he was staring moodily straight in front of him,

 and

and when a chubby, little, chapped hand stole timidly under his short cape and rested itself on his arm he left it to itself and its own devices, as though it had belonged to his maiden aunt and not to the girl who had been monopolizing his thoughts for the past six months. Perhaps the presence of Greta's father, who strode along on her other side, with a smirk curling upwards the corners of his mouth, and his bulbous nose elevated high in the air, had something to do with his apprentice's dejection. In truth there was, perhaps, more reason for Jacob's elation than for Hans's depression. That very morning the rumour running through the little town like wild-fire, had reached the silver-smith's household, that the Emperor's prize had been awarded to the work of Jacob Peller. The announcement had not yet been formally made. That was to take place this afternoon in the presence of the town-folk, who had been bidden to inspect all the works entered for the competition. These, it was understood, were to be displayed in the great hall of the Castle, and the road was thronged with people who, like Jacob Peller, his daughter and his apprentice, were on their way to

view the work of the leading craftsmen in Bavaria and to pass on it the shrewd criticisms of a community in which a knowledge and love of art were well-nigh universal.

'What did I tell you, Hans?' grunted old Jacob, as he waddled along, spurred by his excitement into unwonted activity. 'What did I tell you? I thought my Bacchantes would do the trick. They have never failed yet, lad.'

'Hang his Bacchantes!' muttered Hans, under his breath. 'Ungainly, sprawling toads. I have had them dinged into my ears ever since I was a boy of fifteen, and I have hated them worse every year I have been with him,' and he trudged along in moody contemplation of the shortcomings of the Bacchantes, which, it seemed, had won the prize, and the manifold perfections of the chalice which had lost it. At length the radiant Jacob and the melancholy Hans, with Greta occupying an emotional plane half way between the two, arrived at the Castle gate and followed the stream of people who were passing in, crossing the stone paved court yard and making their way into the great hall. Here on the great dais, at the far end,

 had

had been arranged a double tier of benches. Over these had been thrown a richly-brocaded hanging, taken from the Castellan's canopied seat, and on the extemporized stand thus formed were displayed some score or so of silver-pieces wrought by Nuremberg craftsmen. Here were cups and ewers, candlesticks and salvers, bowls and salt-cellars (for the exact nature of the article to be entered had been left to the competitors themselves) one more elaborately wrought and highly finished than another. To each had been affixed a strip of parchment bearing the name of the competitor written in the Secretary's courtly hand. So it was that the townfolk as they filed by the dais could at a glance see to which of their friends or neighbours the various pieces were to be attributed. In the very centre stood the piece to which the prize had been awarded. So closely were the sight-seers crowded around this that at first Master Peller and his companions could not even catch a glimpse of it, but the old man pushed and forced his way through the crowd, grunting out: 'Make way, good people. Let a man see his own work, won't you?' and occasionally saying in

 a lower

a lower tone to Hans: 'Now boy, you shall see how my Bacchantes surpass all others.' At last they came in front of the masterpiece. But there was no glimpse of Bacchantes to be had. Jacob Peller's jaw dropped and his ruddy face blanched white. 'Why, what's this? what's this?' he stammered. 'Is it a joke they have played on me?' For here was a graceful chalice which he had never seen in his life before, and yet on the parchment slip was legibly inscribed as the maker, 'Jacob Peller.' Hans's eyes lit up. 'It is not the Bacchantes, after all,' he whispered to Greta. 'It is my chalice! And, Oh Greta! I have won the prize. I must run to the Castellan and tell him there has been a mistake in the name. It is mine, and not your father's, as you can bear witness.' But to Hans's surprise the quick affirmative response he had expected did not come. Instead, Greta put her finger on her lips and assumed an air of mystery. 'Hus-s-sh, Hans!' she said, 'don't say a word to any one. I have an idea,' and drawing him aside from the crowd she whispered eagerly into his ear. What she had to say did not seem to please her listener, for at first he shook his head doubtfully.

 'But

'But it is mine, Greta, *mine!*' he objected. The girl stamped her foot petulantly: 'And am I not worth an old silver cup, Hans? I tell you, you *must!*'

'Well, perhaps you are right, Greta. But it will almost break my heart!' She concluded the argument by taking his arm and dragging him up to her father, who was nodding his head vacantly and muttering to himself:

'I don't understand it! I don't understand it!'

'Come out with us to the courtyard, Father,' Greta whispered, excitedly, 'and we will explain it all to you.'

A few minutes later and the three were conversing eagerly in a corner of the courtyard where they were free from interruption.

'But,' said the old man, when his daughter had finished her explanation. 'I shall be laughed out of Nuremberg. After all the congratulations I have received, to have to confess that the chalice is not mine, but my apprentice's! Sure the judges must have been distraught, to give the prize to such a piece as that, which has not even a Bacchante in its decoration. And yet, I see no other way but to tell them of the mistake.'

 'Yes,

'Yes, Master Peller,' said Hans, urged to action by a vigorous nudge from Greta, 'there *is* another way. Let the chalice remain under your name, for though you cannot exhibit as your own, the work of your apprentice, you surely will have a right to it as the work of your son.'

'My—my—*son?*' stammered Jacob.

'Yes—son, or son-in-law. Are they not nearly the same thing?' asked Hans, taking Greta's hand in his.

The old man gazed at them, and then a look of comprehension stole over his dull face.

'Oh! That's the quarter where sits the wind,' he said. 'But, my old gossip, Sebald Pirkheimer? I as good as promised him. Yet—the laugh that will go round the town—and, after all, you are no fool, Hans, the chalice shows that. Well—well—I suppose I must. Come home, children, and we will arrange for the betrothal and tell the neighbours.'

THE OLD WORLD
1540 A. D.

ROME

THE OLD WORLD
1540 A. D.

ROME

THE SILVER CRUCIFIX. CHAPTER CXXIX BOOK FIRST OF HIS LIFE TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN OF MESSER BENVENUTO CELLINI

Now, I must tell you of what happened while I was living in the Cardinal of Ferrara's palace, just after he had helped me to escape from the prison of Sant' Angelo, wherein the malice of Signor Pier Luigi had kept me immured for so long. Small wonder was it that after passing through such indescribable afflictions I found it for awhile impossible to resume my art, and so had it not been for the beneficence of my good friend the Cardinal, it would have been a labour for me to make both ends meet. With a view of establishing my health I was wont to mount a horse, the which his eminence was gracious enough to lend me, and to ride to one of the inns in the outskirts of Rome, there to eat my dinner and enjoy the fresh breeze, taking to my nag in the cool of the

evening

evening for the return journey. It happened one afternoon that I was jogging homeward after a day thus spent, and about twenty-three of the clock, so near as I can recollect, that my horse must have stepped upon a loose stone which those scoundrels* of road-makers had carelessly left in the very middle of the road. Be this as it may or not, though I am inclined to think that such was the case, my horse, which was a favorite of the Cardinal's and had never been known to fall or stumble before, came down upon his fore-knees, and in a trice I was lying upon the flat of my back in the road. I have consulted many wise and learned men on the subject of what happened to me as I lay there, stunned to all appearance by the fall. They are all inclined to believe with me that on this day, which was the Feast of the Purification, in the year 1540, I was vouchsafed, neither for the first nor for the last time, as will appear later, a vision from on high. For as I lay there I heard a loud voice which sounded in my ears and said:

'Benvenuto! Benvenuto! Is it to waste thy time in these idle junketings that Heaven has granted to

 thee

*Furfante.

thee genius and skill beyond all other men? Put off this sloth from thee as men put off a garment, Benvenuto, and take up thy work again to the greater glory of God!'

Now, when I recovered my senses there was no living creature to be seen near or far, so it was evident that this was a voice from Heaven, and as I took my way back to Rome I pondered deeply over the command that had been given me. The end of the matter was that I went to the Cardinal next morning and told him what had happened and further that it was borne in on me that I should show my gratitude to him, and to God who had inspired his heart with pity for me and my misfortunes, by executing for him such a piece of work as should show the envious folk who belittled me that it was not for nothing that he had persuaded the Pope to release me from prison. His excellency was pleased to say that the project was an excellent one and that he would do all that lay in his power towards the furtherance of it. I then told him that it had been revealed to me that a large crucifix with the figure of silver upon a cross of ebony was the form which it was fitting this work should take.

 But

But the Cardinal showed that he was not well pleased with my suggestion.

'I have,' he said, 'some four pounds of silver which the Duke sent me from his mines; but if I give you this it surely will not be enough for the figure you design to make, while for a bowl or a salt-cellar it would be ample. Besides which,' he continued, 'a crucifix will give pleasure to but few, for it will be seen only by those, and they are not many, who have the privilege of entering my private oratory. But reflect, Benvenuto, that a bowl or a salt-cellar will be constantly before the eyes of those who sit at table with me and therefore will be much more to the glory of God who inspired you. Further than this,' he said, 'you can in fashioning it work more in the spirit of the ancients who excelled all those of our own day in the beauty of their art.'

But I replied, 'It is very true, as your eminence says, that a bowl or a salt-cellar will be the more seen and therefore the more admired. But that four or five pounds of silver is not enough for the figure of Christ, I venture to dispute. I am not one of those ignorant fellows who know not how to spare their metal, but think that the more they

 use

use the better the result. Believe me when I tell you that in the hands of one who is proficient in his art, the quantity you mention is more than ample for his needs. I have another reason which I will now disclose which makes me wish rather to make a crucifix than an ornament for your table, and this it is. Everybody, nay, all Italy, knows well that I am a most excellent silversmith and maker of small pieces; but Italy has yet to learn how high I stand as a sculptor, so high indeed that I am willing to stand comparison with my friend Messer Michel Agnolo Buonarotti, than whom no man is a more admirable master of the sculptor's art.'

Then the Cardinal laughed and said, 'I should have known better than to try and reason with you, Benvenuto, for by this time I have learnt that to all argument which comports not with your own wish you are deaf. Only this I would have you remember. Strive to impart to the limbs of thy dead Christ some of the grace and beauty of that masterpiece of antiquity the Apollo, which is to be seen in the Vatican, and which to my mind is by far the finest thing in Rome,' and with this he dismissed me.

Now the Cardinal had placed at my disposal a sort of summer house which stood in the grounds of his palace and had allowed me to have as my assistants a young Roman, a craftsman in my own trade, by name Piero, and my own pupil Arcanio, of whom I have made mention before. To them I entrusted the preparing of the silver and the hammering it into plates of the thickness I required, while I set to and modelled my dead Christ in clay. But we had not been a month thus employed when something occurred which vexed me. My assistants had beaten out the Cardinal's silver and I found by careful measurement that there would be too little, by a cubit's square, for my figure. It was doubtless the fever into which this annoyance threw me—for after my boasting, how could I tell his eminence of the quandary in which I found myself—that was responsible for the difficulty I met with in modelling the face of my figure. Work at it as I would I could not satisfy myself that it did me justice. Thus I was doubly irked, and thinking that violent exercise might restore me to myself and so tranquilize me that I should be able with ready assurance to ask his eminence

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for the extra pound or so of silver that I wanted, I set off on a brisk walk into the country. Hardly had I started, when, as I was crossing the Bridge of St. Angelo, I saw in front of me and going my way, one Messer Jacopo di Rossoli, a goldsmith of my acquaintance. Now I was glad to see this man, though I accounted him ignorant as well as malicious, for one reason in particular. It had happened some three years before this that the fellow had come to me in great distress. He had been entrusted with a fine piece of work by Pope Clement and found himself unable to finish it for lack of silver. I had several bars of the metal lying idle in my workshop at the time, and moved with compassion at the hard plight of one who could claim at least to be a fellow craftsman, I said, 'Take what you want, weigh it, and repay me when you are able in God's name.' He gladly availed himself of my generosity, but such had been his circumstances that for a year or more he was in no position to repay the loan, and after that affairs of greater magnitude had occupied my attention so that I had forgotten it, nor did Ser Jacopo deem it worth while to remind me. Now, however, it came

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into my mind that here was a man who owed me the precise amount of silver that was necessary for the Cardinal's crucifix, and there was about him an air of prosperity that suggested he was well able to discharge his obligation. It fell out, therefore, that I greeted him civilly, and walking by his side fell into conversation with him. By this means I learnt that he was on his way to Tre Fontane on the Ostian Road, where he had lately set up his workshop. He had been in the city to purchase some silver in the rough, and as he hugged close to his side a leathern bag, I judged that in it he carried the bars which, by the appearance of the bag, were about equal to the weight he owed me. So, in a courteous fashion, as is my wont when dealing with those I consider my inferiors, I introduced the subject of his debt to me, and making no bones about it, told him exactly how I was situated and in what need I stood of the silver. Judge of my surprise when the scoundrelly ingrate denied all obligation to me, insisting that I had given, not lent, the silver to him, and defying me to produce any written note of indebtedness. Transported with rage, I seized him by the throat and shook

him violently, but without causing him to waver in his determination, to which he gave utterance when I released him, to deny his debt to me. My choler and indignation were almost too much for me and once more I shook the wretched embezzler, then hurled him from me with such force that he fell forward on his hands and knees. Such, however, was the evil nature of this man that even then he repeated in a mocking voice: *

'I owe you nothing! Show me my receipt for the silver and I will pay it you, for I have it here!' This last remark of his was an unfortunate one for him to make, for it aroused me to fresh fury; drawing from my girdle a Turkish dagger, the handle of which was richly damascened and the blade of exquisite keenness, I plunged it between his shoulders with all the force of which I was capable. The blow must have taken a slanting direction, for it evidently pierced his heart, and to my surprise when I turned him over the man was dead. I dragged the corpse to the roadside and covered the face decently with leaves, but before I did this I took the bag of silver, and as, when I weighed it in my hand, it seemed to nearly equal the

 amount

*Mi mimichione.

amount he owed me, I slung it across my shoulder. As there was no one in sight who could set an inquiry on foot and cause me trouble, I retraced my steps to the city and went straight to my workshop. Here, after washing my hands, which had been smeared with Jacopo's blood when I turned the body over, the first thing I did was to carefully weigh the silver, resolving in my own mind that if it exceeded the amount that was justly owing to me I would take some means of secretly conveying the difference to his family, for throughout my life I have striven to be honest and straightforward in all my dealings. Had I thought I had wronged a widow and her orphans I should have taken no delight in my work. However, when I came to weigh the silver I found to my amazement that there was not the difference of the weight of a grain of wheat between the silver in Jacopo's bag and the amount he owed me. Then I clearly perceived that the finger of God was in all this, and throwing myself on my knees I returned thanks to Him for showing me a way out of my difficulties. And as I prayed I heard the same voice which I had heard on the day of

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the Feast of the Purification, and it said, 'Arise, Benvenuto, and finish the work thou hast begun and have confidence in thyself and the strength that shall be given thee!' I followed the command thus graciously given me forthwith, first, however, taking a hearty meal, for I had been fasting since early morning and felt the need of repairing my strength. Then I set to at my modelling, and never have I known the clay so obedient to my fingers and my modelling tools. I worked by lamp-light when the sun's light failed me and before midnight I had completed my model, and sure never was anything more admirable seen by mortal eye. The features wore an aspect of divine benignity, with such fair grace as for certain the mind of man had ere this not been able to conceive. So rejoiced was I at the outcome of my labours that I made bold to awake the Cardinal and pray him to come down and view my model. He grumbled finely at first, for these great men are not wont to be disturbed, but at last consented and throwing a furred robe over his bed-gown he came to my workshop. When he saw my Christ, which I had disposed to good

 effect

effect in the lamp-light, he said, 'Of a truth, Benvenuto, you have given me the right to steal your name. For *well* it is that I have *come* to see so surpassing a work.* Faith, I know not whether it be luckier for me to have found a man so after my own heart, or for you to have found a Cardinal willing to furnish you the means to carry out your great ideas!'

The next day I began in earnest on the task of producing in silver the work I had modelled in clay, and that you may understand how I did this I can do no better than repeat to you what I said to his eminence when he asked me how I intended to perform so difficult an operation. And this is the way in which I began explaining it to the Cardinal. Quoth I:

'There are many different ways of doing the thing, and each master chooses the method to which his excellence as a craftsman or his fancy guides him. First of all, having made your figure in clay as in the present case has been done, you make a plaster mould of it in many pieces, the breast and the back forming two pieces and the arms, head and legs each in two pieces. These moulds are then cast in

 bronze

**Bene e que sono venuto, etc.*

bronze. Now you have your sheets of silver handy of such sizes as you deem expedient and laying them over the bronze moulds you begin to hammer it with wooden hammers and so carefully round it over the various forms; at intervals you will find it necessary to anneal your sheets of silver by heating them over a charcoal brazier to a red heat. The discreet and cunning master gives a few strokes of the hammer to the edges so as to cause them to overlap slightly. Then he cuts these edges into jags with a pair of scissors and fits one into the other, tightening them with nice judgment with his hammer, holding them over a round stake of iron so as not to indent the silver.

'When all is finished and the various pieces forming the body, legs, arms and head joined together, they are filled with pitch and wrought over with hammer and chases until they present an exact rendering of the clay model. Finally, they are soldered together into one, and the statue or figure is completed.'

When I had delivered myself of these words to the Cardinal he was pleased to say that I had set it before him so clearly and he had understood

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it so well that he thought he was very nearly able himself to undertake such a work. Then said I: 'There are, your eminence, other methods which a master thoroughly conversant with his craft may employ, and these methods are really easier in execution though they seem somehow to be harder of explanation.'

Whereupon the Cardinal retorted that verily he was a great lover of genius;* that I had spoken so convincingly of the one that he would willingly take my word for the other.

Now the way that I actually worked my crucifix was as follows: When I had cast and hammered my silver into sheets I placed my clay model before me, and went straight at the job, and with my consummate knowledge of the hammer and of hammer work beat the sheets into form, striking them from front or from back as the nature of the work demanded. Arms, legs and body I hammered out in separate pieces, and the head I treated as though it were a vase, employing for this purpose the tool we call a snarling-iron, the fixed end of which we strike with a hammer so that the free end beats out the silver by sheer

 force

* *Virtu.*

force of vibration. Now I closed the pieces up by soldering, then filled them with pitch and finished by chasing as I told of to the Cardinal. Then came the job of soldering the arms, legs and head to the body and the figure was finished, there remaining only the task of setting it upon the cross, which I had made in the blackest of ebony. This, then, is how I brought to a successful conclusion the making of my great crucifix for the Cardinal of Ferrara.

The time had now come for the Cardinal himself to see my work, and I had so arranged matters that it was completely finished and in its place before I took him to view it. At first he said nothing, but looked at it from this point and then from that just as though he were an expert. This, I take it, however, was rather to try me and to keep me in suspense than out of any real knowledge of the rules of art. At length he could keep up the pretense no longer, but falling on my neck he exclaimed:

'At last I have found a man after my own heart. Benvenuto, you have given me what all Rome will envy me. Ask of me what you will and I will try

 to

to give it you. You are the prince of sculptors, as I am Prince of the Church, so that we are of the same rank!'

So overcome was I by his condescension that at first I was unable to say a word. Plucking up courage, however, I made shift to thank him, and then it suddenly occurred to me that now was a good time to straighten up that matter of Rossoli. So without more ado I told the Cardinal all that had happened, only that I omitted to say anything about the bar of silver, thinking that to be a matter that concerned myself alone. Beside which, indeed, it was a little more difficult of explanation than the other affair. Well, then the Cardinal at first looked very grave and began to lecture me in no measured terms on my violent temper. He also said that unless I could restrain myself I should get into difficulties some day or another much more serious than this.

'Besides,' he said, 'you should have reflected on your duty towards me and on the risk you ran of hurting my interests. Suppose you had been discovered on the spot and arrested. What would have become of my crucifix, with you in prison, and

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the work half finished? Benvenuto, Benvenuto, be careful that men call you not Malvenuto. As to this affair of Rossoli, however, you may rely on my protection. You are too good a workman for us to lose for the sake of a rascal such as that. But be more careful in the future, and when you look at my crucifix consider that had it not been for the kindness of Heaven you would never have been allowed to complete that masterpiece.' And with that he gave me his blessing, and I went away very content.

THE NEW WORLD
1510 A. D.

MEXICO

A PRINCE OF SILVERSMITHS. HOW MAXTLA THE HIGH PRIEST ASKED OF MONTEZUMA HIS BEST AND HIS DEAREST AS A GIFT TO THE GODS

It was the last day of the ancient Mexican week of five days, and the weekly fair was in progress in the great market-place of Tenochtitlan, as the City of Mexico was called by its original inhabitants. From every direction there had flocked crowds of peasants and artisans to make their purchases, or to dispose of the results of their labours, either at the work-bench or forge, or in tilling the sparse soil of the surrounding country. The huge square in which the market was held, was surrounded by an arcade consisting of gracefully-proportioned pillars of hewn stone, supporting a roof of square slabs of the same material. Thus was provided an abundance of shady nooks, sheltered from the burning sun, for gossip or for bargaining. They were a picturesque

turesque people who crowded the market-place, even the poorer classes well clad in garments of thin white cotton, girt at the waist with a broad sash, often embroidered with richly-coloured linen thread and always finished by a deep fringe of gaily-hued cords. The tilmatli or cloak, of the same finely-textured stuff, fell in graceful folds from the shoulders and offered a telling contrast to the rich copper complexion of the wearer. The women, too, mixed freely with their husbands, brothers and cousins, wearing several skirts or petticoats of varying lengths, set off, like the girdles and cloaks of the men, by coloured embroideries. They wore no veils, as was the custom in some distant parts of the empire, but displayed their far from unattractive faces without false modesty or shame, while their dark, coarse-textured locks fell in straight lines, not without their pleasing effect, within a few inches of their shoulders. It was not a merry or a light-hearted crowd, however, and there were to be heard here none of those interchanges of rustic wit or cheerful banter to which we are accustomed in similar assemblages. There was indeed nothing in the daily life of the Mexican

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of those days to conduce to levity or high spirits. Crushed beneath the yoke of an aristocratic and ecclesiastic autocracy, ambition, with all that it implies of strenuous effort and relief from monotony, was absent, its place being taken by a melancholy acquiescence in their absolute subjection to their superiors, whether civil or religious, while the sombre structures of the pyramidal teocallis, the temples, or rather the sacred shambles, of a religion based upon human sacrifice, shadowed at every turn the busy streets of the city, and cast the gloom of cruel superstition over every detail of the daily life of those who dwelt therein.

The market-square itself was divided into quarters or districts, each one allotted to the display of goods or products of some particular class. Here were great bales of cotton stuffs, and heaps of garments, curtains, and coverings of the same material, dyed in the brightest of colourings, among which green predominated; there the potters of Cholula had laid out in long rows their platters, cups and vases, the latter deftly shaped in imitation of some bird or animal and glazed in

 appropriate

appropriate colourings; on this side the chair and mat makers of Quauhtillan displayed their goods, while on that, the goldsmiths of Azcapozalco tempted their well-to-do customers with gold and silver trinkets of elaborate design and curious workmanship, conspicuous among them being the figures of wild and domestic birds, clothed each one with tiny sheets of precious metal, hammered into the forms of separate feathers with surpassing skill. There were great spaces, too, devoted to the display of fruits and vegetables, many of them products of the tropics, brought to the capital by swift-speeding couriers for the delectation of the Emperor and his chief nobles. Nor were flowers absent, magnificent clusters of cut blossoms being kept fresh by standing them in great earthenware bowls of cool water, while a constant spray was thrown over them, blown through hollow reeds by their careful attendants. Meats, too, raw and cooked into dainty messes, were for sale, while the booths of the sellers of confectionery, in preparing which the Mexicans were adepts, were thronged with crowds of eager purchasers. So, too, were those set apart for the sale of chocolatl, a beverage

 compounded

compounded of cacao beans, flavoured with vanilla and whipped to a creamy froth so thick that it was eaten rather than drunk. Such, too, was the case with those where the inebriating pulque or fermented juice of the aloe was dispensed to the elders, among whom intoxication was considered a merely venial error, though punished as a crime among the youths and young men.

It was through this sedately-moving and somewhat mournful crowd that an elderly man, accompanied by two handsome lads, took his slow way, pausing every now and then to scan the merchandise laid in more or less tempting array before its possible purchasers. By his white robes bordered with black and by the black ribbon tightly drawn across his forehead, by the emerald pendants in his ears and the humming-bird's feather hanging from the disfiguring gash in his lower lip, it was evident that he belonged to the order of the priesthood. The gay feather mantle and helmet-like head-dress, the golden greaves and jewelled girdle of his young companion equally proclaimed him to belong to one of the noble families of the empire. Indeed, he was none other than Machula,

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the youngest son of Montezuma by his favourite wife. The priest was his uncle, Huaca, who though one of the temple attendants of Tezcatlipoca, the chief of Mexican deities, had for some years past devoted himself almost entirely to his nephew's education.

'Well, nephew,' he said in kindly tones, 'keep thine eyes well open, for thou knowest well how much depends on this day's seeing. Thou art to choose a trade to which to apply thyself, and whether it be the making of pots or the weaving of mats that thou electest to set thine hand to, whichever or whatever it may be, for the next seven years it must be thy daily occupation.'

'But, uncle,' said the boy, 'is it not passing strange that I, a Prince, must learn a trade befitting, so it would seem to me, only the base and lowly-born?'

'Nephew!' was the stern reply; 'question not the order of our Lord Montezuma, thy father. In his wisdom he has decreed that thou as his youngest son shalt learn a trade, so that if aught betide thee in time to come, when thy father is no longer here to protect and cherish thee, thou shalt have thy living in thy finger-tips. Even should such dark

days not descend on thee, then our lord declares it will be to thy advantage to know how those beneath thee live and work, ''Twill make him fitter to govern if he learn how to be governed,' says thy father.'

'Then, uncle, I have made up my mind,' said the boy, whose eyes during this talk with the priest had been wandering at intervals to one side where the silver workers of Azcapozalco had displayed their wares. 'I remember how thou wert wont to tell me that the great god Quetzalcoatl, when he walked the earth as a man and taught his children how to live and how to fashion things, delighted above all to work in silver, and showed his children how to coax the white metal out of the rocks by fire, and having gained it, to work it cunningly into every sort of ornament. Even then, when I was only a boy,' and he drew himself up proudly, as though oppressed with the weight of years, 'I used to think that if I had to work, I had rather work in silver than in aught else. Let me be a silver worker, uncle, and I will make thee a chain for thy neck that thou wilt be proud to wear.'

'So be it, Machula mine,' said the priest, tenderly.

 'From

'From this day forth thou art not only Machula the Prince, but Machula the silversmith.'

'Perchance the prince of silversmiths? Eh, uncle?' laughed the lad.

'Perchance. Who knows?' was the grave reply.

II

It was three years later, or, according to our reckoning, the autumn of 1510, and the city of Tenochtitlan lay under a heavy cloud of dismay and apprehension. The streets were still thronged with people as of yore, but to their wonted aspect of mild melancholy had been added a constant look of terror and fear which was apparent in all classes, the haughty nobles who sped swiftly through the broad cement-paved streets in their gorgeous litters, as well as the semi-nude slaves on whose brown shoulders rested the carved litter-poles. On a people so bound in the thralls of a religion based on cruelty and degrading superstition it was not strange that omens of every sort should exercise a powerful influence, and omens of the most diverse as well as of the most startling character had in Tenochtitlan of late been following each

 other

other in breathless succession. The sacred lake of Tecuzco, upon which the city stood, had for the first time in the memory of man, and for no apparent cause, overflowed its banks and wrought ruin and havoc to that part of the city lying at the lowest level. Three comets had blazed in the sky for the space of six weeks and had then disappeared as suddenly as they came. A strange light had made its appearance in the east. Extending over a quarter of the horizon at its base it tapered gradually upwards towards the zenith, looking like a great sheet of flame, thickly powdered with stars, while low voices breaking into dismal wailings were heard in the air. All this was terrifying. Naturally the people turned first to their priests not only for an explanation of these dread portents, but for direction as to the most fitting manner in which they could pacify the gods who thus displayed their anger. A priesthood would have been singularly ignorant of its business if it had not had an answer pat and ready to queries of such a nature. Now no one who has studied their records will accuse the Mexican priests of ignorance of aught a self-respecting priesthood

 should

should know likely to aid them in increasing their hold upon a superstitious people. So it had been announced that the gods were angry. That much the people readily agreed to believe; but why this sudden anger? Had they not sacrificed their thousands of captives, their own children and their loveliest maidens? Had they not paid in tribute to the temples through the guardians thereof, the priests, at least a tenth of all their belongings? Had they not joined in the processions in honor of Tlaloc the dread god of rain, of Tezcatlipoca the dread mirror of the world, of Nitzilopochtli the great Sun-God, the humming-bird who flies to the left, as his name denotes? Had they not done all these things, and had they not brought the best of their crops, their finest melons and their most luscious fruits to place on the altar of the benign Quetzalcoatl, for whose second coming from the east to punish their enemies and to exalt themselves the Aztecs prayed so earnestly, year after year and generation after generation? Had they not done all these things? Why then were the gods so angry? But the priests were accustomed to answer harder ques-

tions even than this, and their answer therefore was not long delayed. It was Quetzalcoatl who was aggrieved. For ten years past, owing to the weakness of the Emperor Montezuma in listening to the advice of his ally and fellow monarch, Nezahualcoyotl, Prince of Tezcuco, the sacrifice made to this great god had consisted of flowers and fruit and sweet-scented gums, instead of the captives and victims who were immolated on the altars of his rival deities. Now the priests declared Quetzalcoatl was jealous and nothing would satisfy him and prevent his showing his anger by deeds rather than by portents save the sacrifice of a special victim. Montezuma dared not withstand the frenzied demands of the people, led by the priests. A victim had accordingly been chosen. One of the handsomest and most physically perfect youths to be found in Tenochtitlan had been chosen and solemnly set aside for the sacrifice. Placed in the hands of tutors, he was carefully taught how to conduct himself with grace and decorum in the dread part he was to enact. Clothed in a splendid dress embellished with the most brilliant of feathers, crowned with chaplets of

 flowers,

flowers, he was attended when he went abroad by a retinue of the Emperor's pages, and wherever he halted the people prostrated themselves before him as though he were Quetzalcoatl himself. A month before the appointed day, four of the fairest damsels in the city were appointed to minister to him, his days were passed in amusements and pleasures of every description, and his nights in feasting and banqueting at the tables of the chief nobles, who honoured him as though he were in truth a god. It was the eve of the fatal day of execution, and already one of the royal barges lay in readiness to carry him across the lake to the great teocalli, fashioned like a huge pyramid, on whose summit the sacrifice was to be offered. It was at this juncture that the heaviest blow which, in the priests' estimation, had ever befallen the city, was struck. Nervous excitement, acting on a youthful frame weakened by long months of excess and dissipation, proved too much for the petted victim. As the priests were divesting him of his gorgeous apparel, prior to his embarkation on the barge of death, he fell forward with a gasping cry, and when they came to raise

 him,

him, he was dead. The news quickly ran through the city, and the state of terrified consternation into which it threw the teeming thousands who formed the population is indescribable. There was not a man, woman or child in the city of Tenochtitlan who did not believe that the nation was doomed. Clearly Quetzalcoatl had rejected their proffered sacrifice and was not to be appeased.

In one of the inner rooms in the straggling pile of buildings which was the palace of Montezuma, sat the Emperor himself, the old Tecuzcan King Nezahualcoyotl, and Maxtla the high priest. The room was a spacious one, the ceiling elaborately inlaid with cedar and other odoriferous woods formed into the most intricate pattern, the walls draped with gaily-colored woven tapestries and the polished stone floor strewn with the rugs of delicate furs. Montezuma himself reclined upon a sort of couch of richly-carved cedar wood, overlaid with plate of beaten gold, his ally Nezahualcoyotl sat near him on a simple bench of the same wood, innocent of adornment, while Maxtla stood in an attitude of easy deference before them.

Montezuma wore his royal robes, the tilmatli or mantle of blue and white held at the throat by the clasp of precious chalchivitl, an emerald-like stone sacred to royalty; emeralds themselves, being of lesser value, were used to decorate the border of the mantle. His feet were shod in golden sandals, golden greaves of curious workmanship covered his legs from the knees downwards, while on his brow he wore the imperial copilli, or diadem of beaten gold, not unlike a pontifical tiara in appearance. His ally was dressed in a simple garment of woven stuff, a feather mantle alone denoting his rank, while Maxtla wore the sombre black and white robes of the priesthood. The priest spoke first.

'It is evident, O Montezuma,' he said, 'that we have offended. Evident too that Quetzalcoatl the Lord of the Air despises our victim and calls for something more precious. All night long have I kept vigil, fasting, in his temple, and with the dawn I saw a vision and it was revealed to me what must be done to repair the blunder that has been committed. The god demands our best and dearest. We thought we had given him our best but he

 refused

refused it with contumely. It was while musing on this that the revelation came to me. It is thou, O Montezuma, thou, the father of thy people, who must provide the sacrifice and give of thy best and dearest.'

'What say you, Nezahualcoyotl?' said Montezuma, gravely.

'I think the priest speaks fairly,' said the old king, 'though for myself, I think it was the smell of blood that was ill savoured in the god's nostrils.'

The priest shot a glance of scorn at the mild and venerable looking old monarch.

'Then is he like no other god we pray to,' he said. 'It was revealed to me,' and his voice rose in a savage ecstacy, 'that it was because he has not been fed on men's blood for these ten years past that he is wroth with us.'

'Well,' said the Emperor. 'What have I to offer of my best. This jewel here?' and he touched the green gem at his throat; 'there is none other of like value in my kingdom, yet freely would I give it for my people's sake.'

'Nay, Lord Montezuma,' said the priest. 'Even

 if

if thou wert to offer that, yet within a space of six moons thou wouldst send to the mines of Cholula and gain from there a stone even larger and of a deeper green in hue than that which it would be an insult to the god to offer him.'

'What then am I to sacrifice?' asked Montezuma, pettishly.

'Before the setting of the sun,' said the priest, grimly, 'it will be revealed to me, and then I warn thee, O King, that whatever I may demand from thee that must thou relinquish cheerfully and with good will, or on thy head, rather than on thy people, shall the vengeance of the outraged god fall.'

The words had scarcely left his lips when the curtains at the far end of the chamber were parted and a youth pushed his way through them, carrying under his arm a package wrapped in cotton cloth. It was Machula, and as his father's eye fell on him it lit up with pleasure, for among all his children none was dearer to him than this boy. Machula was now in his eighteenth year, tall and slender, with the long black hair, falling over his shoulders in sign of his nobility, framing a bronze-

 coloured

coloured face of perfect oval outline. His dark lustrous eyes were ablaze with excitement as he stopped at the threshold and stammered out an apology for his intrusion.

'I thought thou wert alone, my father,' said he, 'and I had something to show thee.'

'Thou shouldst be more careful, my little son,' said Montezuma, with a pretense of sternness, 'but since thou art here show me what wonderful thing thou hast wrapped up as though it were too precious for common eyes to view it. This,' he added, turning courteously to the Tecuzcan King, 'is my Machula, my little silversmith. Thou knowest 'twas by thy advice I had him taught a trade, and the craft he chose was that of silver-working.'

'In the which,' said Nezahualcoyotl, 'the divine Quetzalcoatl was himself proficient when he trod the earth in the guise of a man.'

'Yes, father,' interjected the boy, eagerly, 'and it is the bowl on which I have been hard at work for a year past that I have brought to show thee.'

He knelt down before his father, hastily stripped off the cotton cloth and proudly displayed the large flat bowl or dish which he had been carrying

 under

under his arm. It was a flat bowl, the rim of which was ornamented with a pierced decoration of excessive minuteness, while to serve as its stand the artificer had fashioned four birds, not unlike quail, facing four different ways, so that the bowl rested upon their necks and backs. On the rim, perched as though in the attitude of drinking, was a delicate little humming-bird, rendered with a marvellous closeness to nature. Each separate feather of the plumage, each tiny scale upon the feet of these birds, was worked with absolute fidelity. It was really a piece of superb silver carving, for after the main forms had been modelled and cast, the finishing touches had been given with a variety of bronze chisels, the metal being practically cut into the required form and not coaxed and humored as by the chasing tools of European silversmiths.

'And didst thou really fashion this thyself and unaided, little son?' queried Montezuma.

'Aye, father. No other hand has laid tool to it.'

'Look you, Neza! look you, Maxtla! Saw ever any one the like of it? Why, canst hear the buzz of the humming-bird's wings and the cluck-cluck of the brown birds as they take refuge in the long

 grass.

grass. And to think the lad should have done this at his age! Little son,' he continued, turning to the boy with fatherly pride and affection. 'Be sure there is no jewel in my treasure-house which can compare in value in my eyes with this work of thine. I must have it ever by me, and when I look on it I shall feel proud of my little Machula, who has had the skill to fashion the most cherished of his father's possessions.'

As the words left his lips a keen look passed between the old King and the priest, and the latter stepped forward.

'The revelation has been made sooner than I expected, Lord Montezuma,' he said, 'here at least is a possession it is worth thy while to offer to Quetzalcoatl.'

Montezuma sank back upon the couch and bit his lip in visible annoyance and chagrin.

'Canst ask for nothing else, Maxtla,' he said, ''twill break the lad's heart to see his pretty toy go from him. But still, if thou think'st it necessary.'

'Why, Father, what is the matter? Why does Maxtla scowl so at my poor handiwork?'

 'Trouble

'Trouble not thyself, little son. When we are alone, and it is my will to be alone now, Maxtla, I will explain to thee why for the sake of others thou must give up something that is very dear to thee,' and he drew the youth down to his side with a caressing gesture.

As Maxtla and the old King left the chamber, the latter glanced with surprise at his companion's satunine face.

'Art not satisfied, Maxtla?' he queried in his kindly tones. 'Have matters not turned out precisely as thou would'st have had them?'

'I was thinking,' said the priest sullenly, 'that if Montezuma sets such store by this poor thing of carven silver, how much dearer to him must be the boyish hands which fashioned it.'

'Why, Maxtla? Thou surely canst not mean —?'

'I mean only this, O King! The god claims the Montezuma's best and dearest, and it is fitting he should have it.'

III

The long and tedious ceremonials of the day were nearly over, and Machula, who was playing

one of the chief parts therein, found himself looking somewhat eagerly for sunset and the final act of sacrifice. Yet it must be confessed that, boy-like, he had found more pleasure than he had anticipated in sitting in the gorgeous litter holding at arms' length the silver bowl which his father had reluctantly consented to sacrifice to the great God Quetzalcoatl. Machula himself was now reconciled to the loss of his year's work, and felt a certain amount of pride in the thought that it was his work that was rendered of such supreme importance. So when the litter stopped, and the long line of bystanders, who thronged the great cement causeway which bisected the city and down which the procession took its way, fell prostrate in obeisance before him, he felt as though at last he were almost of equal importance to his elder brother Thoan, who, as heir-apparent, had always been accorded honours far exceeding those paid to Machula. So, too, he had enjoyed the row in one of his father's state barges across the lake to the huge pyramidal temple, where they were met by troops of white-clad girls scattering sweet-scented blossoms in their path. Then had come

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the slow procession up the inclined plane which circled around the temple from the base to the flat platform like summit where the real house of the gods was erected. They had paused before the images, not only of the benign and beneficent Quetzalcoatl, but of the hideous Huitzilopotchli, the dread god of war. Machula had wondered vaguely why in front of the idol Quetzalcoatl had been erected the huge slab of green jasper known as a techcatl or sacrificial stone in place of the bronze brazier for the burning of odoriferous gums which had stood there on his last visit to the temple as a spectator of, and not as a chief actor in, the religious drama. He said nothing to Maxtla, who was by his side, however, and his attention was soon attracted by the preparations for the ceremonious removal of the image of Quetzalcoatl from its pedestal preparatory to its being placed in a gorgeous litter, similar to that in which Machula and the high priest were seated. Then came the final procession around the pillared temple itself with the god in his feather-decked chariot, borne on the shoulders of eight priests, leading the way. At length the weary gyrations

 were

were over, the last song had been sung, the last cluster of delicate blossoms cast to the ground in front of the god. He had been returned to his pedestal and the act of sacrifice was about to begin. 'Take the silver dish in thy two hands and raise it high above thy head,' whispered Maxtla, the priest, as a sort of stage-direction to the youth, who by this time was somewhat awed and frightened by the ceremonial. 'Stand at this end of the techcatl,' he continued, 'and face the people.' Machula did as he was bidden. There was a moment's pause, and then with a sudden movement of his muscular right arm the priest struck the boy a heavy blow in the throat. He staggered backwards, the silver vessel fell clanging to the stone floor and Machula lay stretched at full length on his back on the rounded top of the sacrificial stone. There was a second movement of the priest's arm. The keen-bladed dagger grasped in his right hand sunk deep into the lad's bosom. Like a tiger leaping for his prey the priest hurled himself on the quivering body. With a precision born of horrid custom he slashed this way and that across the boyish breast, plunged his sinewy

 hand

hand into the opening he had formed and holding a nameless something aloft before the impassive idol he shrieked out:

'Take the heart of this, thy victim, O Mighty God of the Air, and may it prove acceptable in thy sight. *This* is Montezuma's best, *this* is his dearest, and in the name of all his people he offers it to thee, O Quetzalcoatl, as a peace offering!'

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As in the dusk of evening the priests and worshippers filed slowly out of the temple and began to descend to the lake again, they left in the gathering gloom of the inner shrine Machula's silver bowl standing on the green stone in front of Quetzalcoatl's image. But in the center of it lay in a blackened coagulating pool of blood the heart of the princely silversmith, its artificer.

THE NEW WORLD
1757 A. D.

LAKE GEORGE

IN THE NORTHERN WOODS. WHICH WAS WHERE LIEUTENANT REVERE ENGRAVED THE PAIR OF SILVER BUCKLES LOST BY CÉLINE PARET

The clearing which General, afterwards Sir William, Johnson's Indians had made for the erection of Fort William Henry was of an extent sufficient only to afford space for the low, sand-heaped bastions of this outpost of his Hanoverian Majesty's American colonies. The tall pines and the sombre hemlocks, the graceful birches and the silvery maples uplifted themselves in all their virgin majesty, within a short bowshot of the fort, so that it was but a step from the cluster of sheds and log-cabins which typified man's dominion over these rude wilds, to the primeval forest itself. On this early fall afternoon, in the year 1757, it was a pleasant change from the sultriness of the shadeless enclosure, which the reflection of the sun from the blue waters of Lake George seemed to

 make

make all the hotter and more oppressive, to the dark recesses of the woodland. Evidently one of General Winslow's young officers had found it so. So soon as morning drill was over, with its concomitant of rasping strictures on the handful of colonial artillerymen who formed his command from the irascible King's officer, Colonel Monroe, Lieutenant Revere had wrapped a piece of dried beef and a hunch of very indifferent bread in a clean pocket handkerchief, stuffed it into the tail pocket of his cutaway uniform coat and disappeared from the fort into the leafy fastnesses of the forest. Close together as the trees grew, the forest was nevertheless no gloomy place. These northern woods are bathed with a flood of filtered sunlight, which somehow intensifies the greenness, not only of the tree foliage, but the underbrush as well. From the dark olive of the hemlock boughs to the translucent emerald of the ferns and mosses, it is a symphony of green, such as rests and soothes the eye in no other quarter of the round globe. Early as it was in the season, however, the maples were touched here and there with a russet, giving promise of those gorgeous tints with which the

first frosts would paint them, while the sumach and trailing brambles also gave a hint that when summer finally took its departure, it would march out attended by a noisy bravura of riotous colour. With his untanned leathern gaiters and tight knee breeches of doe-skin, Lieutenant Revere up to the waist was a woodsman, a hunter or a trapper, though in obedience to the ridiculous British ideas of military fitness, he was, as regards the upper part of his body, buttoned and stocked and pipe-clayed into a fair imitation of a British 'regular.' Nevertheless, he was able, with his colonial training and habitude to the woods, to make fair progress, especially as his way led him along the broad trail, dignified by the name of the King's Road, which skirted along the lake's shores until it reached Ticonderoga and French territory, some thirty miles away. He had been walking for an hour or so, and had put some five miles between himself and the fort, when he suddenly swerved aside from the main trail and struck to the left by a pathway, perceptible only to the keen and trained eye of the woodman. Apparently, however, the lieutenant was familiar with the way, for he trod

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with an assured step, betraying his upbringing only in unconscious heedfulness, as it were, with which as he stepped, he placed his moccasined feet so that every broken branch, every fallen twig, every dry leaf even, was avoided, and the footfalls were as silent and noiseless as those of a wild animal. At length he seemed to have reached his goal. It was a sufficiently charming little nook to have warranted an even longer and more arduous journey in the reaching of it. A crystal stream of water trickled over the brow of a moss-grown granite boulder, at the foot of which it formed a tiny pool or lakelet, which an athletic man might have leaped across. A stout hemlock tree, its roots undermined, doubtless in some time of freshet, had fallen across it, but in such fashion as to span it arch fashion. By a freak of nature, the wide-spreading, upturned roots were so disposed as to form a very fair imitation of a wide-seated arm chair, a foot or two in front of which a gnarled and ingrowing branch had so grown as to form in its turn a sort of flat-topped excrescence, in which it needed no very great stretch of imagination to see a fair apology for a table in front of the natural

chair formed by the roots. The lieutenant stood contemplating the pleasant little nook for a few moments and then, walking up to the tree, he leisurely removed his uniform coat and hung it carefully to a projecting branch. Rolling up the sleeve of his coarse linen home-spun shirt, he thrust his bared arm into a cleft in the trunk, which evidently led to a hollow space within. From this he withdrew, one after the other, two or three small packages. With these he clambered into the seat in the root and laid them on the little platform in front of him. First there was an irregular lump of clear yellow resin, imbedded in which were two large, square, silver shoe-buckles, the broad, flat surfaces of which were deeply lined in an ornamental pattern. From another wrapper he took some little, sharp-pointed, steel tools, each set in a round wooden handle shaped somewhat like a mushroom with one side cut away. They were in fact the home-made burins of an engraver, and in a very few moments the lieutenant had taken one in his right hand, was holding the block of resin firmly before him with his left, and the sharp point of one of the burins, guided mainly

 by

by his broad phalanged thumb, was ploughing out an infinitesimal shaving of silver from the surface of one of the buckles. The lines thus produced were flowing and graceful, and already the work was so far advanced that the design which he was engraving on the surface of the buckles could be clearly discerned. There was a border of maple leaves outlined with exquisite fidelity, a spray from one of the nearby trees lying on the tree-trunk in front of him, and by this time withered and dry, having evidently served him as model, while within this border he was now at work upon an entwined monogram, formed of the two letters C. P., in old-fashioned script. The lieutenant bent assiduously over his work, and under his deft fingers the delicate lines in their graceful curves came into being with a sureness and lack of hesitation that betrayed the eye and hand of the true artist and craftsman. His movements were almost imperceptible, and as he sat there the forest silence was as unbroken as though he were a carven figure instead of a living man. An impudent little chipmunk ran from the leafy branches of the fallen tree along the trunk and then

 stopped

stopped short to gaze with its shining beads of eyes at the intruder on its domain. Finding, however, that there was nothing to be feared from him, it gave a disdainful flirt of its bushy tail and let itself cautiously down from its perch to the ground beneath and started for the edge of the pool and its afternoon drink of the clear, cold water. From the lowermost branch of a hemlock nearby a grey squirrel peered downward with an indignation that soon found vent in a peevish chattering and display of its long white teeth. If Neighbour Chipmunk found nothing to complain of in the advent of this strange beast, Master Squirrel had a grievance of his own against him. Had he not in violation of all the laws of decency cleared the squirrel's storehouse, in the hollow trunk of the fallen tree, of the choice collection of nuts he had begun to gather together for his winter provenance, and in their place put some useless sticks and a lump of uneatable gum? Could any self-respecting squirrel witness such goings on and keep silence? Certainly not, and so in the choicest of squirrel language he let the trespasser and house-breaker know what he thought of him. Not that the

 scolding

scolding seemed to have any effect upon the recipient. There was an introspective look in the lieutenant's large grey eyes as he bent over his work, that made it clear that his thoughts were otherwhere than with his surroundings or even with the work on which his nimble fingers were engaged. That work indeed had reached a stage where, as is so often the case with an artistic production of any description, the creative has given way to the merely technical, and the execution is more or less subconscious. Revere's thoughts were indeed far afield and were concerning themselves with the incidents of the last few days, which incidents had led to the somewhat unusual situation of a lieutenant of artillery in the colonial forces, sitting in a woodland solitude, engraving a pair of silver shoe-buckles in as matter-of-fact a fashion as though it were a part of his routine military duties. He thought of that first meeting, now some three weeks ago, when wandering through the woods on just such an afternoon as this, he had caught sight of something moving among the trees and heard the foot-falls of some living creature. His quick ears had at once apprised him of the fact that this

was no native of the woods; that it was neither a wild animal nor an Indian. It must then be a spy from the French fort at the further end of the lake. Peering with stealthy caution through the trees, he had at length caught sight of the disturber of the woodland solitudes. It was no buck-skin habited trapper lurking about the British settlement to pick up such odds and ends of information as might be useful to the French commander, Vandreuil, who was in charge of Fort St. Fréderique, neither was it a blundering French soldier, as the lieutenant had half expected would be the case, on a similar errand bent. Instead, he saw, picking her way with graceful care through the tangled underbrush, a remarkably pretty young woman, whose short striped skirt and brightly-coloured bodice, laced over a snowy white chemisette, whose bright red stockings and silver-buckled shoes, betrayed even to his masculine gaze her nationality. By his own countrywomen, or by such of them at least who were to be found in the outlying settlements which the fort had been avowedly built to protect, such gaiety of apparel would have been regarded, if not as sinful, at any rate as

 partaking

partaking of foolishness. 'It must be a daughter of one of the *habitans* on the French 'side,'' and so thinking, the worthy lieutenant made up his mind to refrain from prying and to slip away as quietly as he had approached. But he was not to get off so easily. Though quite unconscious of his presence, the young girl made a sudden turn which brought her right across the line of his retreat, and in another second they were face to face. She would not have been feminine if she had not betrayed her surprise by a scream, but it was a scream that had in it scarcely an element of alarm, and indeed sounded musically in the young man's ears.

'Oh! Mon Dieu!' she cried, 'Vous n'ètes pas un sauvage?' with a tone of mock alarm.

'No, madamoiselle,' answered the lieutenant in very passable French. 'I hope I am not. I am an Englishman.'

'Well, if all one hears is true, the difference is one in name only.' This is what she *said;* but the coquettish smile which accompanied the words showed that she did not intend them to be taken very seriously. Indeed, half an hour later the two

were sitting side by side on a fallen log and chatting as amicably and light-heartedly as though such a thing as enmity between their respective nations were the most ridiculous of delusions and the most obvious of misconceptions. The lieutenant's French, though not of the purest or most idiomatic, was enough for all practical and conversational purposes, for, as he was careful to explain to his new acquaintance, his father had come, if not from France itself, at least from one of those Channel Islands, which were English only in name and government. He made a point of this as seeming likely to establish between them the common tie of blood, and indeed it attained his purpose for him, for the girl soon became quite confidential with the good-looking young soldier and told him, among other things, that her name was Céline Paret, that she was the only child of a French settler, who had a small clearing just beyond the creek near Ticonderogue, that her mother had died before they left their home in Normandy a mile or two outside of Rouen, and that she hated the loneliness and dullness of life in this dismal forest. Sometimes, for days

 together,

together, she did not see even her father, who made what little money they ever saw rather from his skill as a trapper and hunter, than from his labours on the acre or two he called his farm. Old Jacques Paret, too, had threatened her with a beating if he ever found her talking to any of the garrison of the French fort, so that her only companionship was the meeting, at long intervals, with the young people of the one or two scattered farms which lay within walking distance of Fort St. Fréderique. The lieutenant, on his side, spoke as freely of himself and his surroundings. He told her of his native Boston, and made her black eyes sparkle with envious longing, as he described its wide streets and its imposing shops. He told her of his own father's modest store in North Square and described the bowed windows with their small panes, of the ground floor and the overhanging upper stories. At this she clapped her hands in delight, for it reminded her of the shop of her 'parrain,' Monsieur Jeudet the hosier, in the Rue de la Grosse Horloge of her beloved Rouen. Then he told her she must not call him an Englishman, but an American, for it appeared he

 had

had as little love for the island-born subjects of King George as she herself. He confided to her, too, his detestation, shared by all his comrades, of his military commander, Colonel Monroe, who hectored and bullied even their beloved General Winslow. The latter, as a colonial, despite his skill and experience of border warfare, was outranked by this barrack-yard martinet, whose knowledge of the art of war seemed to begin and end with the fit of his men's stocks and the perfection with which their belts were pipe-clayed. And he brought a shade of melancholy to her face when he told her how ardently he was looking forward to the end of the following month when the term for which he had volunteered would come to an end and he, with some score of his companions, would bid adieu to Fort William Henry and Lake George and set off on their toilsome journey back to Boston and civil life and home and comfort.

It must not be supposed that all this interchange of confidences took place at this first interview. It grew to be the daily habit of these two young people to meet nearly every afternoon in the woods at a spot where a tiny creek or brooklet,

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owing to a dam which had been raised by a colony of beavers who had long since deserted it, widened out and formed a little pool overgrown with the broad leaves of the water-lily. Old Paret was off on one of his hunting expeditions and so the girl was free to spend her time how she would, while the armed truce prevailing between the two forts at that time, left plenty of leisure upon the lieutenant's hands. But despite these meetings, and their confidential chatterings, the two remained on the same footing of mere good-fellowship which had ushered in their acquaintance. It is true that the lieutenant, as he went about his garrison duties or lay in his narrow shelf-like berth in the long, low, log cabin which served as a dormitory for the officers of the little company, found himself thinking continually of his new-found companion, and we all know to what the continual brooding by one young person upon another of the opposite sex is apt to lead, but let him evince a tendency to become sentimental when he met her in the day-time, a peal of laughter issued from her ripe red lips, and he found himself merely looking foolish instead of impressive.

It was of all these things, then, that he was thinking as the busy burin traveled over the smooth surface of the silver. And he was thinking of something else besides, namely of the innocent jest which had led him to undertake the particular work on which he was engaged. It was about a week before this, that he had come to the trysting-place some half an hour or so earlier than usual. In place of the trim little figure sitting demurely upon a flat rock near the water's edge awaiting his coming, which he was wont to espy when he came within sight of the pool, there was no one to be seen. He had hardly sat down himself to wait for her when he espied close beside him a pair of little russet leather shoes with a red stocking tucked neatly into each one. Glancing up the course of the little streamlet he caught a glimpse of a familiar red bodice, and then he knew what the state of affairs was. Madamoiselle Paret had evidently grown tired of sitting still, had slipped off her shoes and hose, and in child-like fashion was 'paddling' in the brook. He thought he would let her enjoy her innocent pastime a while longer, but as he sat there smilingly contemplating

one of the little shoes which he held in his hand, the sight of the broad silver buckle gave him an idea. Only the day before she had pouted her lips when he had made some casual remark about these same buckles. 'Horrid plain old things?' she had called them. 'Why, Jeanne Dubourg, the daughter of old Dubourg at the next farm, has a pair which she is always flaunting at me. Engraved! Oh, engraved to a marvel, I assure you, Monsieur Revere! But these old things! Bah! I am ashamed to be seen in them.' So she wanted a pair of engraved buckles—'ciselées'—she had termed them? Well, she should have them, and a fright beforehand. He quickly removed the buckles from the shoes and placed them in the inner pocket of his coat. Then he gave a call and stole from the place into the woods behind. Here he discreetly waited for a quarter of an hour or so, and when he returned he found the owner of the shoes sitting on the rock gazing very ruefully at them, for they were now on her shapely little feet. 'Oh, Monsieur Revere,' she quavered. 'Such a misfortune! Whatever shall I say to my father. I placed my shoes on this rock while I

cooled my poor feet in the brook yonder, and behold! Some wandering Indian has stolen my beautiful buckles!' No word now, it will be observed, of their plainness or lack of engraving. 'I'm sure it was an Indian,' she went on, 'for I saw one lurking around here when I came to meet you, but he slunk away into the woods without seeing me.

'The loss of your buckles is a misfortune truly, Madamoiselle,' replied the deceitful lieutenant, 'but I think I see my way to repairing that. No, I must not say another word about it at present —only wait a week and I pledge you my word you shall have your buckles back. But I do not like to hear that you have seen an Indian lurking around here. It makes me reflect that it is not safe for you to take these long journeys through the woods unaccompanied. I am afraid of what might befall."

'Fi donc, Monsieur! A soldier and afraid! The Indians come more often to our home than the white folk, and they are as harmless as harmless!'

'Ah! It is of the Sioux you speak. But those you meet at this end of the lake are of the Iroquois tribe,

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the Five Nations, as they call themselves, allies of the British, and taught, I fear, to look upon all of your nation, women as well as men, as their enemies. I shudder to think what would take place should you happen to meet one of these savages when out of reach of assistance, for only the other day Colonel Monroe received a deputation from them, gave them muskets, powder and ball, and I know not what injunctions as to their conduct towards the French settlers. Be careful, I pray, Madamoiselle, for my sake if not for your own.'

'Oh! Monsieur le Lieutenant! You make me laugh with your fears. I am sure the loss of my poor buckles is the worst I have to fear from any Indian, Iroquois or Sioux, or whatever their outlandish names may be?'

So there was nothing for the lieutenant to do but to reassure her as to the return of her buckles and to insist on accompanying her the greater part of her way home, which had for its only result that he was late in returning to the fort and earned a snappy rebuke from Colonel Monroe as to the bad example such tardiness set to the men in his company.

But the theft of the buckles was an old story by this time. To-day the two weeks were up and they were to be given back to Céline beautified, as he hoped, until they were more than a match for those of her friend, Jeanne Dubourg.

The task had taken him longer than he expected, which was why the finishing touches had been left so late.

He had had to manufacture his burins himself out of a couple of broken knitting needles, which he had begged from the red-faced wife of one of the sergeants in the handful of King's troops still left in the fort after the bulk of the regular garrison had been drafted away and started on the long march to join Lord Loudon at Albany. These he had tempered in the guard-house fire and ground down to a cutting edge on the armourer's grindstone. The handles he had whittled out of a piece of soft pine. Then came the search for resin, which was the best substitute he could think of for the lump of pitch, upon which, under ordinary circumstances, he would have mounted the buckles for greater ease in working. But at last, despite these obstacles, he had triumphed and produced

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here in the open forest as satisfactory a piece of work as he could have turned out in his own Boston workshop, surrounded by all the tools and conveniences of his craft. At length the last line was cut and the work was finished. There only remained to pry the buckles away from the resin, carefully clean from the inner surfaces such fragments of the gum as still clung there, and to give a final polish to the faces. The discarded resin he flung in the direction of the grey squirrel, who resented the missile as one adding insult to injury, the burins he carefully placed in the pocket of his waistcoat, and then, slipping on his coat and hat, he took the buckles in his hand and set off in the direction of the usual meeting-place to find Céline. As he turned away from the fallen tree-trunk what seemed like a brown shadow flitted across his path and vanished in the direction of the fort. It needed no second glance to tell him it was a wandering Iroquois and he felt a recurrence of the uneasy feeling which had prompted him to warn Céline on the day she lost her buckles. 'Sergeant Wells told me only to-day,' he reflected, 'that he fears the colonel had offered a reward for every

French scalp brought in. The girl must be more careful, or —' but he left even his thought unfinished, so hideous was the conclusion to which it was on the point of bringing him, and quickened his step. Arrived in sight of the flat rock he called Céline's name, but no response came. He looked to see if she were sitting in her usual place. But no familiar figure caught his eye. Instead a huddled mass of what looked like clothes by the water's edge. His quick walk broke into a run and now he was near enough to see what the clothes concealed. He stood paralyzed with horror! The slinking Indian on his way to the fort had now received a ghastly explanation. The first French scalp to be delivered up for the pitiful reward offered by Monroe would be that of his gay, laughing, trusting little comrade, Céline Paret.

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A year later, Mr. Paul Revere, silversmith and engraver, was attending to a customer in the old shop in North Square, when from the living room at the back, his pleasant-featured wife of barely two months came in to overhear him say: 'I am

sorry, Madam, but at present I have no silver buckles on hand. In a week or two, if you would care to wait—No? Well, I regret it exceedingly, Madam, but the fact is as I say.'

At the evening meal that night, Mistress Revere observed: "I am sorry you sent Miss Charlotte Pennover away dissatisfied, Paul. Why did you not show her that pair of buckles you have in your old campaigning valise up-stairs. Sure they are beautifully engraved, and might have caught her fancy. The very monogram is hers, which looks as though they might have been made for her.

'Those buckles are not for sale, wife!' was Paul's curt reply, and, question how she might, Mistress Revere could never learn how the buckles with the monogram C. P. came into her husband's possession, or why he so steadfastly refused to part with them.

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